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# SCHILLER'S DRAMAS.

*SCHILLER'S DRAMAS.*

# MARY STUART.

TRANSLATED BY

J. MELLISH.

# THE MAID OF ORLEANS.

TRANSLATED BY

ANNA SWANWICK.

LONDON: GEORGE BELL & SONS, YORK STREET,
COVENT GARDEN.
1883.

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# PREFACE.

The following translation of Mary Stuart is that by Joseph Mellish, who appears to have been on terms of intimate friendship with Schiller*; and mentions, in his preface, that he was commissioned to introduce this tragedy on the English stage. His version was made from the prompter's copy, before the play was published, and, like Coleridge's Wallenstein, contains many passages not found in the printed edition. These are distinguished by brackets. On the other hand, Mr. Mellish omitted many passages which form part of the printed drama, all of which have been added. The translation, as a whole, stands out from similar works of the time (1800) in almost as marked a degree as Coleridge's Wallenstein, and some passages exhibit powers of a high order; a few, however, especially in the earlier scenes, seemed capable of improvement, and these have been revised, but, in deference to the translator, with a sparing hand.

The Maid of Orleans is contributed by Miss Anna Swanwick, who is well known for her translations of Faust and of the Dramas of Æschylus.

* Mr. Mellish was an Etonian, the schoolfellow, and, in after life, the friend and companion of Canning and Frere. With these distinguished scholars he assisted to plan and support the *Microcosm*, published at Eton, in 1786–7. Mr. Mellish, in his maturer years, held the appointment of Consul-General at Hamburg, and, during that period, acquired the friendship and esteem of many of the German literati, especially Goethe, who dedicated a poem to him.

# MARY STUART.

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ELIZABETH, *Queen of England.*
MARY STUART, *Queen of Scots, a Prisoner in England.*
ROBERT DUDLEY, *Earl of Leicester.*
GEORGE TALBOT, *Earl of Shrewsbury.*
WILLIAM CECIL, *Lord Burleigh, Lord High Treasurer.*
*Earl of Kent.*
SIR WILLIAM DAVISON, *Secretary of State.*
SIR AMIAS PAULET, *Keeper of* MARY.
SIR EDWARD MORTIMER, *his Nephew.*
COUNT L'AUBESPINE, *the French Ambassador.*
COUNT BELLIEVRE, *Envoy Extraordinary from France.*
O'KELLY, *Mortimer's Friend.*
SIR DRUE DRURY, *another Keeper of* MARY.
SIR ANDREW MELVIL, *her House-Steward.*
BURGOYNE, *her Physician.*
HANNAH KENNEDY, *her Nurse.*
MARGARET CURL, *her Attendant.*
*Sheriff of the County.*
*Officer of the Guard.*
*French and English Lords.*
*Soldiers.*
*Servants of State, belonging to* ELIZABETH.
*Servants and Female Attendants of the Queen of Scots.*

# MARY STUART.

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.

*A common Apartment in the Castle of Fotheringay*

HANNAH KENNEDY *contending violently with* PAULET, *who is about to break open a closet;* DRURY *with an iron crow.*

KEN. . How now, Sir? What fresh outrage have we here?
Back from that cabinet!
PAULET. Whence came the jewel?
I know 'twas from an upper chamber thrown;
And you would bribe the gard'ner with your trinkets.
A curse on woman's wiles! In spite of all
My strict precaution and my active search,
Still treasures here, still costly gems concealed!
And doubtless there are more where this lay hid.
[*Advancing towards the cabinet.*
KEN. . Intruder, back! here lie my lady's secrets.
PAUL. . Exactly what I seek. [*Drawing forth papers.*
KENNEDY. Mere trifling papers;
The amusements only of an idle pen,
To cheat the dreary tedium of a dungeon.
PAUL. . In idle hours the evil mind is busy.
KEN. . Those writings are in French.
PAULET. So much the worse:
That tongue betokens England's enemy.
KEN. Sketches of letters to the Queen of England.
PAUL. . I'll be their bearer. Ha! what glitters here?
[*He touches a secret spring, and draws out jewels from a private drawer.*
A royal diadem enriched with stones,
And studded with the fleur-de-lis of France!
[*He hands it to his Assistant.*

Here, take it, Drury, lay it with the rest.

[*Exit* DRURY

[ And ye have found the means to hide from us
Such costly things, and screen them, until now,
From our inquiring eyes? ]

KENNEDY. O insolent
And tyrant power, to which we must submit!

PAUL. She can work ill as long as she hath treasures;
For all things turn to weapons in her hands.

KENNEDY (*supplicating*).
O Sir! be merciful; deprive us not
Of the last jewel that adorns our life!
'Tis my poor Lady's only joy to view
This symbol of her former majesty
Your hands long since have robbed us of the rest

PAUL. 'Tis in safe custody; in proper time
'Twill be restored to you with scrupulous care.

KEN. Who that beholds these naked walls could say
That Majesty dwelt here? Where is the throne?
Where the imperial canopy of state?
Must she not set her tender foot, still used
To softest treading, on the rugged ground?
With common pewter, which the lowliest dame
Would scorn, they furnish forth her homely table

PAUL. Thus did she treat her spouse at Stirling once;
And pledged, the while, her paramour in gold.

KEN. Even the mirror's trifling aid withheld.

PAUL. The contemplation of her own vain image
Incites to hope, and prompts to daring deeds.

KEN. Books are denied her to divert her mind.

PAUL. The Bible still is left, to mend her heart.

KEN. Even of her very lute she is deprived!

PAUL. Because she tuned it to her wanton airs.

KEN. Is this a fate for her, the gentle born,
Who in her very cradle was a Queen;
Who, rear'd in Catherine's luxurious court,
Enjoyed the fulness of each earthly pleasure?
Was't not enough to rob her of her power,
Must ye then envy her its paltry tinsel?
A noble heart in time resigns itself
To great calamities with fortitude:

But yet it cuts one to the soul, to part
At once with all life's little outward trappings!

PAUL. These are the things that turn the human heart
To vanity, which should collect itself
In penitence;—for a lewd, vicious life,
Want and abasement are the only penance.

KEN. If youthful blood has led her into error,
With her own heart and God she must account:—
There is no judge in England over her.

PAUL. She shall have judgment where she hath transgress'd.

KEN. Her narrow bonds restrain her from transgression.

PAUL. And yet she found the means to stretch her arm
Into the world, from out these narrow bonds,
And, with the torch of civil war, inflame
This realm against our Queen, (whom God preserve,)
And arm assassin bands. Did she not rouse
From out these walls the malefactor Parry,
And Babington, to the detested crime
Of regicide? And did this iron grate
Prevent her from decoying to her toils
The virtuous heart of Norfolk? Saw we not
The first, best head, in all this island fall
A sacrifice for her upon the block?
[The noble house of Howard fell with him.]
And did this sad example terrify
These mad adventurers, whose rival zeal
Plunges for her into this deep abyss?
The bloody scaffold bends beneath the weight
Of her new daily victims; and we ne'er
Shall see an end till she herself, of all
The guiltiest, be offer'd up upon it.
O! curses on the day when England took
This Helen to its hospitable arms.

KEN. Did England then receive her hospitably?
O hapless Queen! who, since that fatal day
When first she set her foot within this realm,
And, as a suppliant—a fugitive—
Came to implore protection from her sister,
Has been condemned, despite the law of nations,
And royal privilege, to weep away
The fairest years of youth in prison walls

And now, when she hath suffer'd every thing
Which in imprisonment is hard and bitter,
Is like a felon summoned to the bar,
Foully accused, and though herself a queen
Constrained to plead for honour and for life.

PAUL. She came amongst us as a murderess,
Chased by her very subjects from a throne
Which she had oft by vilest deeds disgrac'd.
Sworn against England's welfare came she hither,
To call the times of bloody Mary back,
Betray our Church to Romish tyranny,
And sell our dear-bought liberties to France.
Say, why disdain'd she to subscribe the treaty
Of Edinborough—to resign her claim
To England's crown—and with one single word,
Trac'd by her pen, throw wide her prison gates?
No:—she had rather live in vile confinement,
And see herself ill-treated, than renounce
The empty honours of her barren title.
Why acts she thus? Because she trusts to wiles,
And treacherous arts of base conspiracy;
And, hourly plotting schemes of mischief, hopes
To conquer, from her prison, all this isle

KEN. You mock us, Sir, and edge your cruelty
With words of bitter scorn:—that *she* should form
Such projects; *she*, who 's here immured alive,
To whom no sound of comfort, not a voice
Of friendship comes from her beloved home;
Who hath so long no human face beheld,
Save her stern gaoler's unrelenting brows;
Till now, of late, in your uncourteous cousin
She sees a second keeper, and beholds
Fresh bolts and bars around her multiplied.

PAUL. No iron-grate is proof against her wiles.
How do I know these bars are not fil'd through?
How that this floor, these walls, that seem so strong
Without, may not be hollow from within,
And let in felon treach'ry when I sleep?
Accursed office, that's intrusted to me,
To guard this cunning mother of all ill!
Fear scares me from my sleep; and in the night

I, like a troubled spirit, roam and try
The strength of every bolt, and put to proof
Each guard's fidelity:—I see, with fear,
The dawning of each morn, which may confirm
My apprehensions:—yet, thank God, there's hope
That all my fears will soon be at an end;
For rather would I at the gates of hell
Stand sentinel, and guard the dev'lish host
Of damned souls, than this deceitful Queen.

KEN. . Here comes the Queen.

PAULET. Christ's image in her hand,
Pride, and all worldly lusts within her heart.

SCENE II.

*The same. Enter* MARY *veiled, a crucifix in her hand.*

KENNEDY (*hastening towards her*).
O gracious Queen! they tread us under foot;
No end of tyranny and base oppression;
Each coming day heaps fresh indignities,
New sufferings on thy royal head.

MARY Be calm—
Say, what has happened?

KENNEDY. See! thy cabinet
Is forc'd;—thy papers,—and thy only treasure,
Which with such pains we had secur'd, the last
Poor remnant of thy bridal ornaments
From France, is in his hands:—nought now remains
Of royal state—thou art indeed bereft!

MARY. Compose yourself, my Hannah! and believe me,
'Tis not these baubles which can make a queen:—
Basely indeed they may behave to us,
But they cannot debase us. I have learnt
To use myself to many a change in England;
I can support this too. Sir, you have ta'en
By force, what I this very day designed
To have deliver'd to you. There's a letter
Amongst these papers, for my royal sister
Of England—Pledge me, Sir, your word of honour,
To give it to her majesty's own hands,
And not to the deceitful care of Burleigh

PAUL. . I shall consider what is best to do.

MARY. Sir, you shall know its import. In this letter
I beg a favour, a great favour of her,—
That she herself will give me audience,—she!
Whom I have never seen. I have been summon'd
Before a court of men, whom I can ne'er
Acknowledge as my peers—of men to whom
My heart denies its confidence. The Queen
Is of my family, my rank, my sex;
To her alone—a sister, queen, and woman—
Can I unfold my heart.

PAULET. Too oft, my Lady,
Have you entrusted both your fate and honour
To men less worthy your esteem than these.

MARY. I, in the letter, beg another favour,
And surely nought but inhumanity
Can here reject my prayer. These many years
Have I, in prison, miss'd the church's comfort,
The blessing of the sacraments:—and she
Who robs me of my freedom and my crown,
Who seeks my very life, can never wish
To shut the gates of heaven upon my soul.

PAUL. . Whene'er you wish, the Dean shall wait upon you

MARY (*interrupting him sharply*).
Talk to me not of Deans. I ask the aid
Of one of my own church—a Catholic priest.

PAUL. . [ That is against the publish'd laws of England.

MARY. The laws of England are no rule for me.
I am not England's subject; I have ne'er
Consented to its laws, and will not bow
Before their cruel and despotic sway.
If 'tis your will, to the unheard-of rigour
Which I have borne, to add this new oppression,
I must submit to what your power ordains;—
Yet will I raise my voice in loud complaints.]
I also wish a public notary,
And secretaries, to prepare my will—
My sorrows, and my prison's wretchedness
Prey on my life—my days, I fear, are number d—
I feel that I am near the gates of death.

PAUL . These serious contemplations well become you.

MARY And know I then, that some too ready hand

May not abridge this tedious work of sorrow?
I would indite my will, and make disposal
Of what belongs to me.

PAUL. This liberty
May be allow'd to you, for England's Queen
Will not enrich herself by plundering you.

MARY. I have been parted from my faithful women,
And from my servants;—tell me, where are they?
What is their fate? I can indeed dispense
At present with their service, but my heart
Will feel rejoiced to know these faithful ones
Are not exposed to suff'ring and to want!

PAUL. Your servants have been cared for; [and again
You shall behold whate'er is taken from you:
And all shall be restored in proper season.] [*Going*

MARY And will you leave my presence thus again,
And not relieve my fearful anxious heart
From the fell torments of uncertainty?
Thanks to the vigilance of your hateful spies,
I am divided from the world;—no voice
Can reach me through these prison-walls;—my fate
Lies in the hands of those who wish my ruin.
A month of dread suspense is pass'd already,
Since when the forty high commissioners
Surprised me in this castle, and erected,
With most unseemly haste, their dread tribunal;
They forced me, stunn'd, amaz'd, and unprepar'd,
Without an advocate, from memory,
Before their unexampled court, to answer
Their weighty charges artfully arranged.
—They came like ghosts—like ghosts they disappeared,
And since that day all mouths are clos'd to me.
In vain I seek to construe from your looks
Which hath prevail'd—my cause's innocence
And my friends' zeal—or my foes' cursed counsel.
O! break this silence—let me know the worst—
What I have still to fear, and what to hope.

PAUL. Close your accounts with heaven.

MARY. From heaven I hope
For mercy, Sir;—and from my earthly judges
I hope, and still expect, the strictest justice.

PAUL. . Justice, depend upon it, will be done you.
MARY Is the suit ended, Sir?
PAULET. I cannot tell
MARY. Am I condemn'd?
PAUL. . I cannot answer, Lady.
MARY. [Sir, a good work fears not the light of day.
PAUL. . The day will shine upon it, doubt it not.]
MARY. Despatch is here the fashion Is it meant
The murderer shall surprise me, like the judges?
PAUL. . Still entertain that thought, and he will find you
Better prepared to meet your fate than they did.
MARY (*after a pause*).
Sir, nothing can surprise me, which a court,
Inspired by Burleigh's hate and Hatton's zeal,
Howe'er unjust, may venture to pronounce:—
But I have yet to learn, how far the Queen
Will dare in execution of the sentence.
PAUL. . The sovereigns of England have no fear
But for their conscience, and their parliament.
What justice hath decreed, her fearless hand
Will execute before th' assembled world.

## SCENE III.

*The same.* MORTIMER *enters, and without paying attention to the* QUEEN, *addresses* PAULET

MORT. Uncle, you're sought for
[*He retires in the same manner. The* QUEEN *remarks it, and turns towards* PAULET, *who is about to follow him.*
MARY. Sir, one favour more:—
If *you* have aught to say to me—from *you*
I can bear much—I rev'rence your grey hairs—
But cannot bear that young man's insolence;—
Spare me in future his unmanner'd rudeness.
PAUL. . I prize him most for that which makes you hate him:—
He is not, truly, one of those poor fools
Who melt before a woman's treacherous tears.
He has seen much—has been to Rheims and Paris,
And brings us back his true old English heart.
Lady, your cunning arts are lost on him [*Exit.*

## SCENE IV.

MARY, KENNEDY.

KEN. And dares the ruffian venture to your face
Such language!—O, 'tis hard—'tis past endurance.
MARY (*lost in reflection*).
In the fair moments of our former splendour
We lent to flatt'rers a too willing ear;—
It is but just, good Hannah, we should now
Be forced to hear the bitter voice of censure.
KEN. So downcast, so depressed, my dearest Lady!
You, who before so gay, so full of hope,
Were used to comfort me in my distress?
More gracious were the task to check your mirth
Than chide your heavy sadness.
MARY Well I know him—
It is the bleeding Darnley's royal shade,
Rising in anger from his darksome grave:
And never will he make his peace with me
Until the measure of my woes be full.
KEN. What thoughts are these—
MARY Thou may'st forget it, Hannah;
But I've a faithful mem'ry—'tis this day
Another wretched anniversary
Of that regretted, that unhappy deed—
Which I must celebrate with fast and penance
KEN. Dismiss at length in peace this evil spirit.
The penitence of many a heavy year,
Of many a suffering, has atoned the deed:
The church, which holds the key of absolution,
Pardons the crime, and heav'n itself 's appeas'd.
MARY This long atoned crime arises fresh
And bleeding from its lightly cover'd grave—
My husband's restless spirit seeks revenge—
No sacred bell can exorcise, no host
In priestly hands dismiss it to his tomb.
KEN. You did not murder him—'twas done by others
MARY But it was known to me;—I suffer'd it,
And lured him with my smiles to death's embrace.
KEN. Your youth extenuates your guilt. You were
Of tender years.

MARY So tender, yet I drew
This heavy guilt upon my youthful head.
KEN. You were provok'd by direst injuries,
And by the rude presumption of the man,
Whom out of darkness, like the hand of heav'n,
Your love drew forth, and raised above all others·
Whom through your bridal chamber you conducted
Up to your throne, and with your lovely self,
And your hereditary crown, distinguish'd:—
[Your work was his existence, and your grace
Bedew'd him like the gentle rains of heav'n.]
Could he forget, that his so splendid lot
Was the creation of your gen'rous love?
Yet did he, worthless as he was, forget it.
With base suspicions, and with brutal manners,
He wearied your affections, and became
An object to you of deserv'd disgust:—
Th' illusion, which till now had overcast
Your judgment, vanish'd; angrily you fled
His foul embrace, and gave him up to scorn.
And did he seek again to win your love?
Your favour? Did he e'er implore your pardon?
Or fall in deep repentance at your feet?
No; the base wretch defied you:—he, who was
Your bounty's creature, wish'd to play your king,
[And strove, through fear, to force your inclination
Before your eyes he had your fav'rite singer,
Poor Rizzio, murder'd: you did but avenge
With blood, the bloody deed——
MARY And bloodily,
I fear, too soon 'twill be aveng'd on me:—
You seek to comfort me, and you condemn me.
KEN. You were, when you consented to this deed,
No more yourself—belong'd not to yourself—
The madness of a frantic love possess'd you,
And bound you to a terrible seducer,
The wretched Bothwell. That despotic man
Rul'd you with shameful, overbearing will,
And with his philters and his hellish arts
Inflamed your passions.
MARY. All the arts he used
Were man's superior strength, and woman's weakness

KEN. . No, no, I say. The most pernicious spirits
Of hell he must have summoned to his aid,
To cast this mist before your waking senses.
Your ear no more was open to the voice
Of friendly warning, and your eyes were shut
To decency; soft female bashfulness
Deserted you; those cheeks, which were before
The seat of virtuous blushing modesty,
Glow'd with the flames of unrestrain'd desire:
You cast away the veil of secrecy,
And the flagitious daring of the man
O'ercame your natural coyness: you expos'd
Your shame, unblushingly, to public gaze:
You let the murd'rer, whom the people follow'd
With curses, through the streets of Edinburgh,
Before you bear the royal sword of Scotland
In triumph. You begirt your parliament
With armed bands; and by this shameless farce,
There, in the very temple of great Justice,
You forc'd the judges of the land to clear
The murderer of his guilt. You went still farther—
O God!

MARY. Conclude—nay, pause not—say for this
I gave my hand in marriage at the altar

KEN. O let an everlasting silence veil
That dreadful deed: the heart revolts at it,
A crime to stain the darkest criminal!
Yet you are no such lost one, that I know.
I nurs'd your youth myself—your heart is fram'd
For tender softness: 'tis alive to shame,
And all your fault is thoughtless levity.
Yes, I repeat it, there are evil spirits,
Who sudden fix in man's unguarded breast
Their fatal residence, and there delight
To act their dev'lish deeds; then hurry back
Unto their native hell, and leave behind
Remorse and horror in the poison'd bosom.
Since this misdeed, which blackens thus your life,
You have done nothing ill; your conduct has
Been pure; myself can witness your amendment.
Take courage, then; with your own heart make peace

Whatever cause you have for penitence,
You are not guilty here. Nor England's Queen,
Nor England's parliament can be your judge.
Here *might* oppresses you: you may present
Yourself before this self-created court
With all the fortitude of innocence.

MARY. I hear a step.

KENNEDY. It is the nephew—In.

SCENE V.

*The same. Enter* MORTIMER, *approaching cautiously.*

MORTIMER (*to* KENNEDY).
Step to the door, and keep a careful watch,
I have important business with the Queen.

MARY (*with dignity*).
I charge thee, Hannah, go not hence—remain.

MORT. Fear not, my gracious Lady—learn to know me.
[*He gives her a card*

MARY. [*She examines it, and starts back astonished*
Heav'ns! What is this?

MORTIMER (*to* KENNEDY). Retire, good Kennedy;
See that my uncle comes not unawares.

MARY (*to* KENNEDY, *who hesitates, and looks at the* QUEEN *inquiringly*).
Go in; do as he bids you.
[KENNEDY *retires with signs of wonder*

SCENE VI

MARY, MORTIMER.

MARY From my uncle
In France—the worthy Card'nal of Lorrain?
[*She reads.*
"Confide in Mortimer, who brings you this;
You have no truer, firmer friend in England."
[*Looking at him with astonishment*
Can I believe it? Is there no delusion
To cheat my senses? Do I find a friend
So near, when I conceiv'd myself abandon'd
By the whole world? And find that friend in you,
The nephew of my gaoler, whom I thought
My most invet'rate enemy?

MORTIMER (*kneeling*). O pardon,

My gracious Liege, for the detested mask,
Which it has cost me pain enough to wear;
Yet through such means alone have I the pow'r
To see you, and to bring you help and rescue

MARY. Arise, Sir; you astonish me; I cannot
So suddenly emerge from the abyss
Of wretchedness to hope: let me conceive
This happiness, that I may credit it.

MORT Our time is brief: each moment I expect
My uncle, whom a hated man attends:
Hear, then, before his terrible commission
Surprises you, how Heav'n prepares your rescue.

MARY You come, in token of its wondrous pow'r.

MORT. Allow me of myself to speak.

MARY Say on.

MORT I scarce, my Liege, had numbered twenty years,
Train'd in the path of strictest discipline,
And nurs'd in deadliest hate to Papacy,
When led by irresistible desire
For foreign travel, I resolv'd to leave
My country and its puritanic faith
Far, far behind me: soon with rapid speed
I flew through France, and bent my eager course
On to the plains of far-famed Italy.
'Twas then the time of the great Jubilee:—
And crowds of palmers fill'd the public roads;
Each image was adorn'd with garlands; 'twas
As if all human-kind were wand'ring forth
In pilgrimage towards the heav'nly kingdom
The tide of the believing multitude
Bore me too onward with resistless force,
Into the streets of Rome. What was my wonder,
As the magnificence of stately columns
Rush'd on my sight! the vast triumphal arches,
The Colosseum's grandeur, with amazement
Struck my admiring senses; the sublime
Creative spirit held my soul a prisoner
In the fair world of wonders it had fram'd.
I ne'er had felt the power of art till now.
The Church that rear'd me hates the charms of sense;

It tolerates no image, it adores
But the unseen, the incorporeal word.
What were my feelings, then, as I approach'd
The threshold of the churches, and within,
Heard heav'nly music floating in the air:
While from the walls and high-wrought roofs there
stream'd
Crowds of celestial forms in endless train—
When the Most High, Most Glorious, pervaded
My captivated sense in real presence!
And when I saw the great and godlike visions,
The Salutation, the Nativity,
The Holy Mother, and the Trinity's
Descent, the luminous Transfiguration:
And last the holy Pontiff, clad in all
The glory of his office, bless the people!
O! what is all the pomp of gold and jewels
With which the kings of earth adorn themselves
*He* is alone surrounded by the Godhead;
*His* mansion is in truth an heav'nly kingdom,
For not of earthly moulding are these forms!

MARY. O spare me, Sir! No further. Spread no more
Life's verdant carpet out before my eyes,
Remember I am wretched, and a prisoner.

MORT I was a prisoner too, my Queen; but swift
My prison-gates flew open, when at once
My spirit felt its liberty, and hail'd
The smiling dawn of life. I learn'd to burst
Each narrow prejudice of education,
To crown my brows with never-fading wreaths,
And mix my joy with the rejoicing crowd.
Full many noble Scots, who saw my zeal,
Encourag'd me, and with the gallant French
They kindly led me to your princely uncle,
The Cardinal of Guise. O what a man!
How firm, how clear, how manly, and how great!
Born to control the human mind at will!
The very model of a royal priest;
A ruler of the Church without an equal!

MARY You've seen him then,—the much lov'd, honour'd man.

Who was the guardian of my tender years!
O speak of him! Does he remember me?
Does fortune favour him? And prospers still
His life? And does he still majestic stand,
A very rock and pillar of the Church?

MORT. The holy man descended from his height,
And deign'd to teach me the important creed
Of the true Church, and dissipate my doubts.
He show'd me, how the glimm'ring light of reason
Serves but to lead us to eternal error:
That what the heart is call'd on to believe,
The eye must see: that he who rules the Church
Must needs be visible; and that the Spirit
Of truth inspir'd the Councils of the Fathers.
How vanish'd, then, the fond imaginings
And weak conceptions of my childish soul
Before his conquering judgment, and the soft
Persuasion of his tongue! So I return'd
Back to the bosom of the holy Church,
And at his feet abjur'd my heresies.

MARY. Then of those happy thousands, you are one,
Whom he, with his celestial eloquence,
Like the immortal preacher of the mount,
Has turn'd, and led to everlasting joy!

MORT. The duties of his office call'd him soon
To France, and I was sent by him to Rheims,
Where, by the Jesuits' anxious labour, priests
Are train'd to preach our holy faith in England.
There, 'mongst the Scots, I found the noble Morgan,
And your true Lesley, Ross's learned bishop,
Who pass in France their joyless days of exile
I join'd with heartfelt zeal these worthy men,
And fortified my faith. As I one day
Roam'd through the Bishop's dwelling, I was struck
With a fair female portrait; it was full
Of touching, wond'rous charms; with magic might
It mov'd my inmost soul, and there I stood
Speechless, and overmaster'd by my feelings.
"Well," cried the Bishop, "may you linger thus
In deep emotion near this lovely face!
For the most beautiful of womankind,

Is also matchless in calamity.
She is a prisoner for our holy faith,
And in your native land, alas! she suffers."
[MARY *is in great agitation.—He pauses*

MARY. Excellent man! All is not lost, indeed,
While such a friend remains in my misfortunes!

MORT. Then he began, with moving eloquence,
To paint the suff'rings of your martyrdom;
He showed me, then, your lofty pedigree,
And your descent from Tudor's royal House.
He prov'd to me that you alone have right
To reign in England, not this upstart Queen,
The base-born fruit of an adult'rous bed,
Whom Henry's self rejected as a bastard.
[He from my eyes remov'd delusion's mist,
And taught me to lament you as a victim,
To honour you as my true Queen, whom I,
Deceiv'd, like thousands of my noble fellows,
Had ever hated as my country's foe.]
I would not trust his evidence alone;
I question'd learned doctors; I consulted
The most authentic books of heraldry;
And every man of knowledge, whom I ask'd,
Confirm'd to me your claim's validity.
And now I know that your undoubted right
To England's throne has been your only wrong.
This realm is justly yours by heritage,
In which you innocently pine as pris'ner.

MARY O this unhappy right!—'tis this alone
Which is the source of all my sufferings.

MORT. Just at this time the tidings reached my ears,
Of your removal from old Talbot's charge,
And your committal to my uncle's care.
It seem'd to me that this disposal mark'd
The wondrous, outstretch'd hand of fav'ring Heaven:
It seem'd to be a loud decree of fate,
That it had chosen me to rescue you.
My friends concur with me; the Cardinal
Bestows on me his counsel and his blessing,
And tutors me in the hard task of feigning.
The plan in haste digested, I commenced

My journey homewards, and ten days ago
On England's shores I landed.—Oh, my Queen,
[*He pauses.*
I saw then, not your picture, but yourself—
Oh what a treasure do these walls enclose!
No prison this, but the abode of gods,
More splendid far than England's royal Court.
Happy, thrice happy he, whose envied lot
Permits to breathe the selfsame air with you!
It is a prudent policy in her
To bury you so deep! All England's youth
Would rise at once in general mutiny,
And not a sword lie quiet in its sheath:
Rebellion would uprear its giant head,
Through all this peaceful isle, if Britons once
Beheld their captive Queen.

MARY. 'Twere well with her,
If ev'ry Briton saw her with your eyes!

MORT. Were each, like me, a witness of your wrongs,
Your meekness, and the noble fortitude
With which you suffer these indignities—
Would you not then emerge from all these trials
Like a true Queen? Your prison's infamy,
Hath it despoil'd your beauty of its charms?
You are depriv'd of all that graces life,
Yet round you life and light eternal beam.
Ne'er on this threshold can I set my foot,
That my poor heart with anguish is not torn,
Not ravish'd with delight at gazing on you.
Yet fearfully the fatal time draws near,
And danger hourly growing presses on.
I can delay no longer—can no more
Conceal the dreadful news.—

MARY. My sentence then!
Is it pronounc'd? Speak freely—I can bear it.

MORT. It is pronounc'd! The two-and-forty judges
Have giv'n the verdict, "guilty;" and the Houses
Of Lords and Commons, with the citizens
Of London, eagerly and urgently
Demand the execution of the sentence:—
The Queen alone still craftily delays,

That she may be constrain'd to yield, but not
From feelings of humanity or mercy.

MARY (*collected*).

Sir, I am not surpris'd, nor terrified
I have been long prepar'd for such a message.
Too well I know my judges. After all
Their cruel treatment I can well conceive
They dare not now restore my liberty.
I know their aim: they mean to keep me here
In everlasting bondage, and to bury,
In the sepulchral darkness of my prison,
My vengeance with me, and my rightful claims

MORT. O! no, my gracious Queen;—they stop not there
Oppression will not be content to do
Its work by halves:—as long as e'er you live,
Distrust and fear will haunt the English Queen
No dungeon can inter you deep enough;
Your death alone can make her throne secure.

MARY Will she then dare, regardless of the shame,
Lay my crown'd head upon the fatal block?

MORT. She will most surely dare it, doubt it not.

MARY. And can she thus roll in the very dust,
Her own, and ev'ry monarch's majesty?

MORT. She thinks on nothing now but present danger,
Nor looks to that which is so far removed.

MARY. And fears she not the dread revenge of France?

MORT. With France she makes an everlasting peace;
And gives to Anjou's Duke her throne and hand

MARY. Will not the King of Spain rise up in arms?

MORT. She fears not a collected world in arms,
If with her people she remain at peace.

MARY. Were this a spectacle for British eyes?

MORT. This land, my Queen, has, in these latter days,
Seen many a royal woman from the throne
Descend, and mount the scaffold:—her own mother
And Cath'rine Howard trod this fatal path:
And was not Lady Grey a crowned head?

MARY (*after a pause*).

No, Mortimer, vain fears have blinded you;
'Tis but the honest care of your true heart,
Which conjures up these empty apprehensions.

It is not, Sir, the scaffold that I fear:
There are so many still and secret means,
By which her Majesty of England may
Set all my claims to rest. O, trust me, ere
An executioner is found for me,
Assassins will be hir'd to do their work.
'Tis that which makes me tremble, Mortimer:
I never lift the goblet to my lips
Without an inward shudd'ring, lest the draught
May have been mingled by my sister's love.

MORI. No:—neither open nor disguised murder
Shall e'er prevail against you:—fear no more;
All is prepar'd;—twelve nobles of the land
Are my confed'rates, and have pledg'd to-day,
Upon the Sacrament, their faith to free you,
With dauntless arm, from this captivity.
Count Aubespine, the French Ambassador,
Knows of our plot, and offers his assistance:
'Tis in his palace that we hold our meetings

MARY. You make me tremble, Sir, but not for joy;
An evil boding penetrates my heart.
Know you, then, what you risk? Are you not scar'd
By Babington and Tichburn's bloody heads,
Set up as warnings upon London's bridge?
Nor by the ruin of those many victims
Who have, in such attempts, found certain death.
And only made my chains the heavier?
Fly hence, deluded, most unhappy youth!
Fly, if there yet be time for you, before
That crafty spy, Lord Burleigh, track your schemes,
And mix his traitors in your secret plots.
Fly hence:—as yet, success hath never smil'd
On Mary Stuart's champions.

MORTIMER. I'm not scar'd
By Babington and Tichburn's bloody heads,
Set up as warnings upon London's bridge;
Nor by the ruin of those many victims
Who have, in such attempts, found certain death:
They also found therein immortal honour,
And death, in rescuing you, is dearest bliss.

MARY. It is in vain: nor force nor guile can save me:—
My enemies are watchful, and the pow'r
Is in their hands. It is not Paulet only
And his dependent host; all England guards
My prison gates; Elizabeth's free will
Alone can open them.
MORTIMER. Expect not that
MARY. One man alone on earth can open them.
MORT. O! let me know his name!
MARY. Lord Leicester.
MORTIMER. He!
[*Starts back in wonder.*
The Earl of Leicester! Your most bloody foe,
The fav'rite of Elizabeth!—through him—
MARY. If I am to be sav'd at all, 'twill be
Through him, and him alone. Go to him, Sir;
Freely confide in him: and, as a proof
You come from me, present this paper to him.
[*She takes a paper from her bosom;* MORTIMER *draws back, and hesitates to take it.*
It doth contain my portrait:—take it, Sir;
I've borne it long about me: but your uncle's
Close watchfulness has cut me off from all
Communication with him;—you were sent
By my good angel. [*He takes it*
MORTIMER. O, my Queen! explain
This mystery.
MARY. Lord Leicester will resolve it.
Confide in him, and he'll confide in you
Who comes?
KENNEDY (*entering hastily*).
'Tis Paulet; and he brings with him
A nobleman from court.
MORTIMER. It is Lord Burleigh.
Collect yourself, my Queen, and strive to hear
The news he brings, with equanimity.
[*He retires through a side door, and* KENNEDY *follows him.*

## Scene VII

*Enter* Lord Burleigh, *and* Paulet.

**Paulet** (*to* Mary).
You wish'd to-day, assurance of your fate;
My Lord of Burleigh brings it to you now.
Hear it with resignation, as beseems you.
**Mary** I hope with dignity, as it becomes
My innocence, and my exalted station.
**Bur.** I come deputed from the court of justice.
**Mary.** Lord Burleigh lends that court his willing tongue,
Which was already guided by his spirit.
**Paul.** You speak as if no stranger to the sentence.
**Mary.** Lord Burleigh brings it; therefore do I know it
**Paul** [It would become you better, Lady Stuart,
To listen less to hatred.
**Mary.** I but name
My enemy: I said not that I hate him.]
But to the matter, Sir.
**Burleigh.** You have acknowledg'd
The jurisdiction of the two-and-forty.
**Mary** My Lord, excuse me, if I am oblig'd
So soon to interrupt you. I acknowledg'd,
Say you, the competence of the commission?
I never have acknowledg'd it, my Lord;
How could I so? I could not give away
My own prerogative, th' intrusted rights
Of my own people, the inheritance
Of my own son, and ev'ry monarch's honour
[The very laws of England say I could not.]
It is enacted by the English laws,
That ev'ry one who stands arraign'd of crime
Shall plead before a jury of his equals:
Who is my equal in this high commission?
Kings only are my peers.
**Burleigh.** But yet you heard
The points of accusation, answer'd them
Before the court——
**Mary.** 'Tis true, I was deceiv'd
By Hatton's crafty counsel:—he advis'd me,
For my own honour, and in confidence

In my good cause, and my most strong defence.
To listen to the points of accusation,
And prove their falsehood. *This*, my Lord, I did
From personal respect for the lords' names,
Not their usurped charge, which I disclaim.

BUR. Acknowledge you the court, or not, that is
Only a point of mere formality,
Which cannot here arrest the course of justice
You breathe the air of England; you enjoy
The law's protection, and its benefits;
You therefore are its subject.

MARY. Sir, I breathe
The air within an English prison walls:—
Is that to live in England; to enjoy
Protection from its laws? I scarcely know
And never have I pledg'd my faith to keep them.
I am no member of this realm; I am
An independent, and a foreign Queen.

BUR. And do you think that the mere name of Queen
Can serve you as a charter to foment
In other countries, with impunity,
This bloody discord? Where would be the state's
Security, if the stern sword of justice
Could not as freely smite the guilty brow
Of the imperial stranger, as the beggar's?

MARY. I do not wish to be exempt from judgment,
It is the judges only I disclaim.

BUR. The judges? How now, Madam! Are they then
Base wretches, snatch'd at hazard from the crowd?
Vile wranglers, that make sale of truth and justice;
Oppression's willing hirelings, and its tools?
Are they not all the foremost of this land,
Too independent to be else than honest,
And too exalted not to soar above
The fear of Kings, or base servility?
Are they not those, who rule a gen'rous people
In liberty and justice; men, whose names
I need but mention, to dispel each doubt,
Each mean suspicion which is rais'd against them?
Stands not the rev'rend Primate at their head,
The pious shepherd of his faithful people,

The learned Talbot, Keeper of the Seals,
And Howard, who commands our conqu'ring fleets?
Say, then, could England's sovereign do more
Than, out of all the monarchy, elect
The very noblest, and appoint them judges
In this great suit? And were it probable
That party hatred could corrupt *one* heart;
Can forty chosen men unite to speak
A sentence just as passion gives command?

MARY (*after a short pause*).
I am struck dumb by that tongue's eloquence,
Which ever was so ominous to me.
And how shall I, a weak, untutor'd woman,
Cope with so subtle, learn'd an orator?
Yes truly; were these lords as you describe them,
I must be mute; my cause were lost indeed,
Beyond all hope, if they pronounc'd me guilty.
But, Sir, these names, which you are pleas'd to praise
These very men, whose weight you think will crush me,
I see performing in the history
Of these dominions, very different parts:
I see this high nobility of England,
This grave majestic senate of the realm,
Like to an eastern monarch's vilest slaves,
Flatter my uncle Henry's sultan fancies:
I see this noble rev'rend House of Lords,
Venal alike with the corrupted Commons,
Make statutes and annul them, ratify
A marriage and dissolve it, as the voice
Of power commands: to-day it disinherits,
And brands the royal daughters of the realm
With the vile name of bastards, and to-morrow
Crowns them as queens, and leads them to the throne.
I see them in four reigns, with pliant conscience,
Four times abjure their faith; renounce the Pope
With Henry, yet retain the old belief;
Reform themselves with Edward; hear the mass
Again with Mary; with Elizabeth,
Who governs now, reform themselves again.

BUR. You say you are not vers'd in England's laws.
You seem well read, methinks, in her disasters.

MARY And these men are my judges?

[*As* LORD BURLEIGH *seems to wish to speak*

My Lord Treas'rer,
Tow'rds you I will be just, be you but just
To me.—'Tis said, that you consult with zeal
The good of England, and of England's Queen;
Are honest, watchful, indefatigable:
I will believe it. Not your private ends,
Your Sovereign and your country's weal alone,
Inspire your counsels and direct your deeds.
Therefore, my noble Lord, you should the more
Distrust your heart; should see that you mistake not
The welfare of the government, for justice.
I do not doubt, besides yourself, there are
Among my judges many upright men:
But they are Protestants, are eager all
For England's quiet, and they sit in judgment
On me, the Queen of Scotland, and the Papist.
It is an ancient saying, that the Scots
And English to each other are unjust;
And hence the rightful custom, that a Scot
Against an Englishman, or Englishman
Against a Scot, cannot be heard in judgment.
Necessity prescrib'd this cautious law;
Deep policy oft lies in ancient customs:
My Lord, we must respect them. Nature cast
Into the ocean these two fiery nations
Upon this plank, and she divided it
Unequally, and bade them fight for it.
The narrow bed of Tweed alone divides
These daring spirits; often hath the blood
Of the contending parties dyed its waves.
Threat'ning, and sword in hand, these thousand years,
From both its banks they watch their rival's motions,
Most vigilant and true confederates,
With ev'ry en'my of the neighbour state.
No foe oppresses England, but the Scot
Becomes his firm ally; no civil war
Inflames the towns of Scotland, but the English
Add fuel to the fire: this raging hate
Will never be extinguish'd till, at last,

One parliament in concord shall unite them,
One common sceptre rule throughout the isle.

BUR. And from a Stuart, then, should England hope
This happiness?

MARY O! why should I deny it?
Yes, I confess, I cherish'd the fond hope,
I thought myself the happy instrument
To join in freedom, 'neath the olive's shade,
Two gen'rous realms in lasting happiness!
I little thought I should become the victim
Of their old hate, their long-liv'd jealousy,
And the sad flames of that unhappy strife,
I hop'd at last to smother, and for ever:
And, as my ancestor, great Richmond, join'd
The rival roses after bloody contest,
To join in peace the Scotch and English crowns.

BUR. An evil way you took to this good end,
To set the realm on fire, and through the flames
Of civil war to strive to mount the throne.

MARY I wish'd not that:—I wish'd it not, by Heaven!
When did I strive at that?—Where are your proofs?

BUR. I came not hither to dispute; your cause
Is no more subject to a war of words.
The great majority of forty voices
Hath found that you have contraven'd the law
Last year enacted, and have now incurr'd
Its penalty [*Producing the verdict*

MARY Upon this statute, then,
My Lord, is built the verdict of my judges?

BURLEIGH (*reading*).
Last year it was enacted, "If a plot
Henceforth should rise in England, in the name
Or for the benefit of any claimant
To England's crown, that justice should be done
On such pretender, and the guilty party
Be prosecuted unto death." Now, since
It has been prov'd——

MARY. Lord Burleigh, I can well
Imagine that a law expressly aim'd
At me, and fram'd to compass my destruction
May to my prejudice be used O! woe

To the unhappy victim, when the tongue,
That frames the law, shall execute the sentence.
Can you deny it, Sir, that this same statute
Was made for my destruction, and nought else?

BUR. It should have acted as a warning to you:
By your imprudence it became a snare.
You saw the precipice which yawn'd before you;
Yet, truly warn'd, you plung'd into the deep.
With Babington, the traitor, and his bands
Of murderous companions, were you leagued.
You knew of all, and from your prison led
Their treasonous plottings with a deep-laid plan.

MARY. When did I that, my Lord? Let them produce
The documents.

BURLEIGH. You have already seen them:
They were, before the court, presented to you.

MARY. Mere copies written by another hand;
Show me the proof that they were dictated
By me, that they proceeded from my lips,
And in those very terms in which you read them

BUR. Before his execution, Babington
Confess'd they were the same which he receiv'd

MARY. Why was he in his lifetime not produc'd
Before my face? Why was he then despatch'd
So quickly, that he could not be confronted
With her whom he accus'd?

BURLEIGH. Besides, my Lady,
Your secretaries, Curl and Nau, declare
On oath, they are the very selfsame letters
Which, from your lips, they faithfully transcrib'd

MARY. And on my menials' testimony, then,
I am condemn'd; upon the word of those
Who have betray'd me, *me*, their rightful Queen;
Who in that very moment, when they came
As witnesses against me, broke their faith!

BUR. You said yourself, you held your countryman
To be an upright conscientious man.

MARY I thought him such; but 'tis the hour of danger
Alone, which tries the virtue of a man
[He ever was an honest man, but weak
In understanding; and his subtle comrade,

Whose faith, observe. I never answer'd for,
Might easily seduce him to write down
More than he should;] the rack may have compell'd him
To say and to confess more than he knew.
He hop'd to save himself by this false witness,
And thought it could not injure *me*—a Queen.

BUR. The oath he swore was free and unconstrain'd.

MARY. But not before my face! How now, my Lord,
The witnesses you name are still alive,
Let them appear against me, face to face!
And there repeat what they have testified!
Why am I then denied that privilege,
That right, which e'en the murderer enjoys?
I know from Talbot's mouth, my former keeper,
That in this reign a statute has been pass'd,
Which orders that the plaintiff be confronted
With the defendant; is it so, good Paulet?
I e'er have known you as an honest man,
Now prove it to me; tell me, on your conscience,
If such a law exist, or not, in England?

PAUL. Madam, there does: that is the law in England.
I must declare the truth.

MARY. Well then, my Lord,
If I am treated by the law of England
So hardly, when that law oppresses me,
Say, why avoid this selfsame country's law,
When 'tis for my advantage? Answer me;
Why was not Babington confronted with me?
Why not my servants, who are both alive?

BUR. Be not so hasty, Lady; 'tis not only
Your plot with Babington——

MARY 'Tis that alone
Which arms the law against me; that alone
From which I'm call'd upon to clear myself
Stick to the point, my Lord; evade it not.

BUR It has been prov'd that you have corresponded
With the Ambassador of Spain, Mendoza——

MARY. Stick to the point, my Lord.

BURLEIGH. That you have form'd
Conspiracies to overturn the fix'd
Religion of the realm; that you have call'd

Into this kingdom foreign pow'rs, and rous'd
All kings in Europe to a war with England.

MARY. And were it so, my Lord—though I deny it—
But e'en suppose it were so: I am kept
Imprison'd here against all laws of nations.
I came not into England sword in hand;
I came a suppliant; and at the hands
Of my imperial kinswoman, I claim'd
The sacred rights of hospitality.
When power seized upon me, and prepared
To rivet fetters, where I hop'd protection.
Say, is my conscience bound, then, to this realm?
What are the duties that I owe to England?
I should but exercise a sacred right,
Deriv'd from sad necessity, if I
Warr'd with these bonds, encounter'd might with might,
Roused and incited ev'ry state in Europe,
For my protection, to unite in arms
Whatever in a rightful war is just
And loyal, 'tis my right to exercise:
Murder alone, the secret bloody deed,
My conscience and my pride alike forbid.
Murder would stain me, would dishonour me:
Dishonour me, my Lord!—but not condemn me,
Nor subject me to England's courts of law:
For 'tis not justice, but mere violence,
Which is the question 'tween myself and England

BURLEIGH (*significantly*).
Talk not, my Lady, of the dreadful right
Of pow'r: 'tis seldom on the pris'ner's side

MARY I am the weak; she is the mighty one:
'Tis well, my Lord; let her then use her pow'r;
Let her destroy me: let me bleed, that she
May live secure: but let her then confess
That she hath exercised her pow'r alone,
And not contaminate the name of justice.
Let her not borrow, from the laws, the sword
To rid her of her hated enemy:
Let her not clothe, in this religious garb,
The bloody daring of licentious might:

Let not these juggling tricks deceive the world.—
[*Returning the sentence*
Though she may murder me, she cannot judge me:—
Let her no longer strive to join the fruits
Of vice with virtue's fair and angel show;
But let her dare to seem the thing she is. [*Exit*

## SCENE VIII.

BURLEIGH, PAULET

BUR. She scorns us, she defies us! will defy us,
Ev'n at the scaffold's foot. This haughty heart
Is not to be subdued. Say, did the sentence
Surprise her? Did you see her shed one tear,
Or even change her colour? She disdains
To make appeal to our compassion. Well
She knows the wav'ring mind of England's Queen.
Our apprehensions make her bold.

PAULET. My Lord,
Take the pretext away which buoys it up,
And you shall see this proud defiance fail
That very moment. I must say, my Lord,
Irregularities have been allowed
In these proceedings; Babington and Ballard
Should have been brought, with her two secretaries,
Before her, face to face.

BURLEIGH. No, Paulet, no!
That was not to be risk'd; her influence
Upon the human heart is too supreme;
Too strong the female empire of her tears.
Her secretary, Curl, if brought before her,
And call'd upon to speak the weighty word
On which her life depends, would straight shrink back,
And fearfully revoke his own confession.

PAUL. Then England's enemies will fill the world
With evil rumours; and the formal pomp
Of these proceedings, to the minds of all,
Will only signalize an act of outrage.

BUR. That is the greatest torment of our Queen,
[ That she can never 'scape the blame. O God! ]

Had but this lovely mischief died before
She set her faithless foot on English ground
PAUL. . Amen, say I!
BURLEIGH. Had sickness but consum'd her!
PAUL. . England had been secur'd from much misfortune.
BUR. . And yet, if she had died in nature's course,
The world would still have call'd us murderers
PAUL. 'Tis true, the world will think, despite of us,
Whate'er it list.
BURLEIGH. Yet could it not be prov'd?
And it would make less noise.
PAULET. Why let it make
What noise it may. It is not clam'rous blame,
'Tis righteous censure only, which can wound.
BUR We know that holy justice cannot 'scape
The voice of censure; and the public cry
Is ever on the side of the unhappy:
Envy pursues the laurell'd conqueror;
The sword of justice, which adorns the man,
Is hateful in a woman's hand; the world
Will give no credit to a woman's justice,
If woman be the victim. Vain that we,
The judges, spoke what conscience dictated;
*She* has the royal privilege of mercy;
She *must* exert it: 'twere not to be borne,
Should she let justice take its full career.
PAUL. And therefore——
BURLEIGH Therefore should she live? O! no,
She must not live; it must not be. 'Tis this,
Ev'n this, my friend, which so disturbs the Queen,
And scares all slumber from her couch; I read
Her soul's distracting contest in her eyes;
She fears to speak her wishes, yet her looks,
Her silent looks, significantly ask,
"Is there not one amongst my many servan
To save me from this sad alternative?
Either to tremble in eternal fear
Upon my throne, or else to sacrifice
A Queen of my own kindred on the block?"
PAUL 'Tis even so; nor can it be avoided—

BEA. . Well might it be avoided, thinks the Queen,
If she had only more attentive servants.
PAUL. . How more attentive?
BURLEIGH. Such as could interpret
A silent mandate.
PAULET. What? A silent mandate!
BUR. . Who, when a pois'nous adder is deliver'd
Into their hands, would keep the treach'rous charge
As if it were a sacred, precious jewel?
PAUL. A precious jewel is the Queen's good name,
And spotless reputation: good, my Lord,
One cannot guard it with sufficient care.
BUR. When, out of Shrewsb'ry's hand, the Queen of Scots
Was trusted to Sir Amias Paulet's care,
The meaning was——
PAULET. I hope to God, my Lord,
The meaning was, to give the weightiest charge
Into the purest hands: my Lord, my Lord!
By Heav'n, I had disdain'd this bailiff's office,
Had I not thought the service claim'd the care
Of the best man that England's realm can boast.
Let me not think I am indebted for it
To any thing but my unblemish'd name.
BUR. Spread the report, she wastes; grows sicker still,
And sicker; and expires at last in peace;
Thus will she perish in the world's rememb'rance,
And your good name is pure.
PAULET But not my conscience.
BUR. . Though you refuse us, Sir, your own assistance.
You will not, sure, prevent another's hand.
PAUL. No murd'rer's foot shall e'er approach her threshold,
Whilst she's protected by my household gods.
Her life's a sacred trust; to me the head
Of Queen Elizabeth is not more sacred.
Ye are the judges; judge, and break the staff;
And when 'tis time, then let the carpenter,
With axe and saw appear to build the scaffold
My castle's portals shall be open to him.
The sheriff and the executioners:
Till then, she is intrusted to my care;
And, be assur'd, I will fulfil my trust,
She shall nor *do*, nor *suffer* what's unjust. [*Exeunt*

## ACT II.

### SCENE I.

*London, a Hall in the Palace of Westminster*

*The* EARL OF KENT *and* SIR WILLIAM DAVISON, *meeting*

DAV Is that my Lord of Kent? So soon return'd?
Is then the tourney, the carousal over?
KENT. How now? Were you not present at the tilt?
DAV. My office kept me here
KENT Believe me, Sir,
You've lost the fairest show which ever taste
Devis'd, or graceful dignity perform'd:
For beauty's virgin fortress was presented,
As by *Desire* invested; the Earl Marshal,
The Lord High Admiral, and ten other knights,
Belonging to the Queen, defended it,
And France's Cavaliers led the attack.
A herald march'd before the gallant troop,
And summon'd, in a madrigal, the fortress;
And from the walls the Chancellor replied;
And then th' artillery was play'd, and nosegays,
Breathing delicious fragrance, were discharg'd
From neat field-pieces; but in vain, the storm
Was valiantly resisted, and *Desire*
Was forc'd, unwillingly, to raise the siege
DAV. A sign of evil boding, good, my Lord,
For the French suitors.
KENT Why, you know that this
Was but in sport; when the attack's in earnest,
The fortress will, no doubt, capitulate.
DAV Ha! think you so? I never can believe it
KENT The hardest article of all is now
Adjusted, and acceded to by France;
The Duke of Anjou is content to hold
His holy worship in a private chapel,
And openly he promises to honour
And to protect the realm's establish'd faith.
Had you but heard the people's joyful shouts
Where'er the tidings spread, for it has been

The country's constant fear the Queen might die,
Without immediate issue of her body;
And England bear again the Romish chains,
If Mary Stuart should ascend the throne.

DAV. . This fear appears superfluous; she goes
Into the bridal chamber; Mary Stuart
Enters the gates of death.

KENT. The Queen approaches

## SCENE II

*Enter* ELIZABETH, *led in by* LEICESTER, COUNT AUBESPINE, BELLIEVRE, LORDS SHREWSBURY *and* BURLEIGH, *with other French and English Gentlemen.*

ELIZABETH (*to* AUBESPINE).
Count, I am sorry for these noblemen,
Whose gallant zeal hath brought them over sea
To visit these our shores, that they, with us,
Must miss the splendour of St. Germain's court.
Such pompous festivals of godlike state
I cannot furnish, as the royal court
Of France. A sober and contented people,
Which crowd around me with a thousand blessings,
Whene'er in public I present myself:
*This* is the spectacle which I can show,
And not without some pride, to foreign eyes.
The splendour of the noble dames who bloom
In Cath'rine's beauteous garden would, I know
Eclipse myself, and my more modest merits.

AUB. . The court of England has one lady only,
To show the wond'ring foreigner; but all
That charms our hearts in the accomplish'd sex,
Is seen united in her single person.

BEL. . Great Majesty of England, suffer us
To take our leave, and to our royal master,
The Duke of Anjou, bring the happy news.
The hot impatience of his heart would not
Permit him to remain at Paris; he
At Amiens awaits the joyful tidings;
And thence to Calais reach his posts, to bring

With winged swiftness to his tranced ear
The sweet consent which, still we humbly hope,
Your royal lips will graciously pronounce.

ELIZ. Press me no further now, Count Bellievre,
It is not now a time, I must repeat,
To kindle here the joyful marriage torch.
The heav'ns low'r black and heavy o'er this land;
And weeds of mourning would become me better
Than the magnificence of bridal robes.
A fatal blow is aim'd against my heart;
A blow which threatens to oppress my House

BEL. We only ask your Majesty to promise
Your royal hand when brighter days shall come

ELIZ. Monarchs are but the slaves of their condition;
They dare not hear the dictates of their hearts.
My wish was ever to remain unmarried,
And I had plac'd my greatest pride in this,
That men hereafter on my tomb might read
"Here rests the virgin Queen." But my good subjects
Are not content that this should be: they think,
E'en now they often think, upon the time
When I shall be no more. 'Tis not enough
That blessings now are shower'd upon this land;
They ask a sacrifice for future welfare,
And I must offer up my liberty,
My virgin liberty, my greatest good,
To satisfy my people. Thus they'd force
A lord and master on me. 'Tis by this
I see that I am nothing but a woman
In their regard; and yet methought that I
Had govern'd like a man, and like a king.
Well wot I that it is not serving God,
To quit the laws of nature; and that those
Who here have rul'd before me merit praise,
That they have op'd the cloister gates, and giv'n
Thousands of victims of ill-taught devotion,
Back to the duties of humanity.
But yet a Queen, who hath not spent her days
In fruitless, idle contemplation; who,
Without a murmur, indefatigably,
Performs the hardest of all duties; she

Should be exempted, from that natural law
Which doth ordain one half of human kind
Shall ever be subservient to the other.

AUB. . Great Queen, you have upon your throne done honour
To ev'ry virtue; nothing now remains,
But to the sex, whose greatest boast you are,
To be the leading star, and give the great
Example of its most consistent duties.
'Tis true, the man exists not who deserves
That you to him should sacrifice your freedom;
Yet if a hero's soul, descent, and rank,
And manly beauty can make mortal man
Deserving of this honour—

ELIZABETH. Without doubt,
My Lord Ambassador, a marriage union
With France's royal son would do me honour:
Yes, I acknowledge it without disguise,
If it must be, if I cannot prevent it,
If I must yield unto my people's prayers,
And much I fear they will o'erpower me,
I do not know, in Europe, any prince
To whom with less reluctance I would yield
My greatest treasure, my dear liberty.
Let this confession satisfy your master.

BEL. . It gives the *fairest* hope, and yet it gives
Nothing *but* hope; my master wishes more.

ELIZ. . What wishes he?

[*She takes a ring from her finger, and thoughtfully examines it.*

In this a Queen has not
One privilege above all other women.
This common token marks one common duty,
One common servitude; the ring denotes
Marriage; and 'tis of rings a chain is form'd.
Convey this present to his Highness; 'tis
As yet no chain, it binds me not as yet.
But out of it may grow a link to bind me.

BELLIEVRE (*kneeling*).
This present, in his name, upon my knees,
I do receive, great Queen, and press the kiss

Of homage on the hand of her who is
Henceforth my princess.

ELIZABETH (*to the* EARL OF LEICESTER, *whom she, during the last speeches, had continually regarded*).
By your leave, my Lord.
[*She takes the blue riband from his neck* *, *and invests Bellievre with it.*
Invest his Highness with this ornament,
As I invest you with it, and receive you
Into the duties of my gallant order.
And, "Honi soit qui mal y pense." Thus perish
All jealousy between our several realms,
And let the bond of confidence unite,
Henceforth, the crowns of Britain and of France

BEL. Most sov'reign Queen, this is a day of joy;
O that it could be so for all, and no
Afflicted heart within this island mourn.
See! mercy beams upon thy radiant brow;
Let the reflection of its cheering light
Fall on a wretched princess, who concerns
Britain and France alike.

ELIZABETH No further, Count!
Let us not mix two inconsistent things;
If France be truly anxious for my hand,
It must partake my interests, and renounce
Alliance with my foes.

AUBESPINE. In thine own eyes
Would she not seem to act unworthily,
If in this joyous treaty, she forgot
This hapless Queen, the widow of her king;
In whose behalf, her honour and her faith
Are bound to plead for grace.

ELIZABETH. Thus urged, I know
To rate this intercession at its worth;
France has discharged her duties as a friend,
I will fulfil my own as England's Queen.
[*She bows to the French Ambassadors, who, with the other Gentlemen, retire respectfully.*

* Till the time of Charles the First, the Knights of the Garter were the

## SCENE III.

*Enter* BURLEIGH, LEICESTER, *and* TALBOT. *The* QUEEN *takes her seat.*

BUR. . Illustrious sovereign, thou crown'st to day
The fervent wishes of thy people: now
We can rejoice in the propitious days
Which thou bestow'st upon us; and we look
No more with fear and trembling tow'rds the time
Which, charg'd with storms, futurity presented
Now, but one only care disturbs this land;
It is a sacrifice which every voice
Demands; O! grant but this, and England's peace
Will be establish'd now and evermore.

ELIZ. . What wish they still, my Lord? Speak.

BURLEIGH. They demand
The Stuart's head. If to thy people thou
Wouldst now secure the precious boon of freedom,
And the fair light of truth so dearly won,
Then she must die: if we are not to live
In endless terror for thy precious life,
The enemy must fall: for well thou know'st,
That all thy Britons are not true alike:
Romish idolatry has still its friends
In secret, in this island, who foment
The hatred of our enemies. Their hearts
All turn towards this Stuart; they are leagu'd
With the two plotting brothers of Lorrain,
The foes invet'rate of thy house and name.
'Gainst thee this raging faction hath declar'd
A war of desolation, which they wage
With the deceitful instruments of hell.
At Rheims, the Cardinal Archbishop's see,
*There* is the arsenal, from which they dart
These lightnings; *there* the school of regicide;
*Thence*, in a thousand shapes disguis'd, are sent
Their secret missionaries to this isle;

blue riband with the George, about their necks, as they still do the collars, on great days.—TRANSLATOR.

Their bold and daring zealots; for from *thence*,
Have we not seen the third assassin come?
And inexhausted is the direful breed
Of secret enemies in *this* abyss.
While in her castle sits, at Fotheringay,
The *Até* * of this everlasting war,
Who, with the torch of love, spreads flames around;
For her who sheds delusive hopes on all,
Youth dedicates itself to certain death;
To set her free is the pretence—the aim
Is to establish her upon the throne.
For this accursed House of Guise denies
Thy sacred right; and in their mouths thou art
A robber of the throne, whom chance has crown'd.
By them this thoughtless woman was deluded,
Proudly to style herself the Queen of England:
No peace can be with her, and with her house;
[Their hatred is too bloody, and their crimes
Too great;] thou must resolve to strike, or suffer;—
Her life is death to thee, her death thy life.

ELIZ. My Lord, you bear a melancholy office:
I know the purity which guides your zeal,
The solid wisdom which informs your speech:
And yet I hate this wisdom, when it calls
For blood, I hate it in my inmost soul.
Think of a milder counsel—Good, my Lord
Of Shrewsbury, we crave your judgment here.

TAL. [Desire you but to know, most gracious Queen,]

* The picture of Até, the Goddess of mischief, we are acquainted with from Homer, Il. v. 91. 130. I. 501. She is a daughter of Jupiter, and eager to prejudice every one, even the immortal gods. She counteracted Jupiter himself, on which account he seized her by her beautiful hair, and hurled her from heaven to the earth, where she now, striding over the heads of men, excites them to evil, in order to involve them in calamity.—HERDER.

Shakspere has, in Julius Cæsar, made a fine use of this image:—

"And Cæsar's spirit, ranging for revenge,
With Até by his side, come hot from hell,
Shall in these confines, with a monarch's voice,
Cry havoc, and let slip the dogs of war."

I need not point out to the reader, the beautiful propriety of introducing this evil spirit on this occasion.—TRANSLATOR.

[What is for your advantage, I can add
Nothing to what my Lord High Treasurer
Has urged; then, for your welfare, let the sentence
Be now confirm'd—this much is prov'd already:
There is no surer method to avert
The danger from your head, and from the state.
Should you in this reject our true advice,
You can dismiss your council. We are plac'd
Here as your counsellors, but to consult
The welfare of this land, and with our knowledge,
And our experience, we are bound to serve you!
But in what 's good and just, most gracious Queen,
You have no need of counsellors, your conscience
Knows it full well, and it is written there.
Nay it were overstepping our commission
If we attempted to instruct you in it.

ELIZ. . Yet speak, my worthy Lord of Shrewsbury,
'Tis not our understanding fails alone,
Our heart too feels it wants some sage advice.]

TAL. . Well did you praise the upright zeal which fires
Lord Burleigh's loyal breast; my bosom too,
Although my tongue be not so eloquent,
Beats with no weaker, no less faithful pulse.
Long may you live, my Queen, to be the joy
Of your delighted people, to prolong
Peace and its envied blessings in this realm.
Ne'er hath this isle beheld such happy days
Since it was govern'd by its native kings.
O let it never buy its happiness
With its good name; at least, may Talbot's eyes
Be clos'd in death, e'er this shall come to pass.

ELIZ. . Forbid it, Heaven, that our good name be stain'd

TAL. . Then must you find some other way than this
To save thy kingdom, for the sentence pass'd
Of death against the Stuart is unjust.
You cannot upon her pronounce a sentence,
Who is not subject to you.

ELIZABETH. Then, it seems,
My council and my parliament have err'd;
Each bench of justice in the land is wrong,
Which did, with one accord, admit this right.

TALBOT (*after a pause*).
The proof of justice lies not in the voice
Of numbers; England 's not the world, nor is
Thy parliament the focus, which collects
The vast opinion of the human race.
This present England is no more the future,
Than 'tis the past; as inclination changes,
Thus ever ebbs and flows the unstable tide
Of public judgment. Say not then, that thou
Must act as stern necessity compels,
That thou must yield to the importunate
Petitions of thy people; ev'ry hour
Thou canst experience that thy will is free
Make trial, and declare, thou hatest blood,
And that thou wilt protect thy sister's life;
Show those who wish to give thee other counsels,
That *here* thy royal anger is not feign'd,
And thou shalt see how stern necessity
Can vanish, and what once was titled justice
Into injustice be converted: thou
Thyself must pass the sentence, thou alone:—
Trust not to this unsteady, trembling reed,
But hear the gracious dictates of thy heart.
God hath not planted rigour in the frame
Of woman; and the founders of this realm,
Who to the female hand have not denied
The reins of government, intend by this
To show that mercy, not severity,
Is the best virtue to adorn a crown.
ELIZ. . Lord Shrewsb'ry is a fervent advocate
For mine, and England's enemy; I must
Prefer those counsellors who wish *my* welfare
TAL. . . Her advocates have an invidious task!
None will, by speaking in her favour, dare
To meet thy anger: suffer, then, an old
And faithful counsellor (whom nought on earth
Can tempt, on the grave's brink) to exercise
The pious duty of humanity.
It never shall be said, that, in thy council,
Passion and interest could find a tongue,
While mercy's pleading voice alone was mute,

All circumstances have conspir'd against her;
Thou ne'er hast seen her face, and nothing speaks
Within thy breast for one that 's stranger to thee.
I do not take the part of her misdeeds;
They say 'twas she who plann'd her husband's murder:
'Tis true that she espous'd his murderer.
A grievous crime, no doubt; but then it happen'd
In darksome days of trouble and dismay,
In the stern agony of civil war,
When she, a woman, helpless and hemm'd in
By a rude crowd of rebel vassals, sought
Protection in a powerful chieftain's arms.
God knows what arts were used to overcome her!
For woman is a weak and fragile thing.

ELIZ. Woman's not weak; there are heroic souls
Among the sex; and, in my presence, Sir,
I do forbid to speak of woman's weakness.

TAL. Misfortune was for thee a rigid school;
Thou wast not station'd on the sunny side
Of life; thou saw'st no throne, from far, before thee;
The grave was gaping for thee at thy feet.
At Woodstock, and in London's gloomy tower,
'Twas *there* the gracious father of this land
Taught thee to know thy duty, by misfortune.
No flatt'rer sought thee there: there learn'd thy soul,
Far from the noisy world and its distractions,
To commune with itself, to think apart,
And estimate the real goods of life.
No God protected this poor sufferer:
Transplanted in her early youth to France,
The Court of levity and thoughtless joys,
There, in the round of constant dissipation,
She never heard the earnest voice of truth;
She was deluded by the glare of vice,
And driven onward by the stream of ruin.
Hers was the vain possession of a face,
And she outshone all others of her sex
As far in beauty, as in noble birth.

ELIZ. Collect yourself, my Lord of Shrewsbury;
Bethink you we are met in solemn council.
Those charms must surely be without compare

Which can engender, in an elder's blood,
Such fire. My Lord of Leicester, you alone
Are silent; does the subject which has made
Him eloquent, deprive you of your speech?

LEIC. . Amazement ties my tongue, my Queen, to think
That they should fill thy soul with such alarms,
And that the idle tales, which, in the streets
Of London, terrify the people's ears,
Should reach th' enlighten'd circle of thy council,
And gravely occupy our statesmen's minds.
Astonishment possesses me, I own,
To think this lackland Queen of Scotland, she
Who could not save her own poor throne, the jest
Of her own vassals, and her country's refuse,
[Who in her fairest days of freedom, was
But thy despised puppet,] should become
At once thy terror when a prisoner.
What, in Heaven's name, can make her formidable?
That she lays claim to England? that the Guises
Will not acknowledge thee as Queen? [Did then
Thy people's loyal fealty await
These Guises' approbation?] Can these Guises
With their objections, ever shake the right
Which birth hath giv'n thee; which, with one consent,
The votes of parliament have ratified?
And is not she, by Henry's will, pass'd o'er
In silence? Is it probable that England,
As yet so bless'd in the new light's enjoyment,
Should throw itself into this papist's arms?
From thee, the sov'reign it adores, desert
To Darnley's murderess? What will they then,
These restless men, who even in thy lifetime
Torment thee with a successor; who cannot
Dispose of thee in marriage soon enough
To rescue church and state from fancied peril?
Stand'st thou not blooming there in youthful prime
While each step leads her tow'rds th'expecting tomb?
By Heavens, I hope thou wilt full many a year
Walk o'er the Stuart's grave, and ne'er become
Thyself the instrument of her sad end.

BUR. . . Lord Leicester hath not always held this tone

LEIC. 'Tis true, I in the court of justice gave
My verdict for her death; here, in the council,
I may consistently speak otherwise:
Here, right is not the question, but advantage.
Is this a time to fear her power, when France,
Her only succour, has abandon'd her?
When thou preparest with thy hand to bless
The royal son of France, when the fair hope
Of a new, glorious stem of sovereigns
Begins again to blossom in this land?
Why hasten then her death? She's dead already.
Contempt and scorn are death to her; take heed
Lest ill tim'd pity call her into life.
'Tis therefore my advice to leave the sentence,
By which her life is forfeit, in full force.
Let her live on; but let her live beneath
The headsman's axe, and, from the very hour
One arm is lifted for her, let it fall.

ELIZABETH (*rises*).
My Lords, I now have heard your sev'ral thoughts,
And give my ardent thanks for this your zeal.
With God's assistance, who the hearts of kings
Illumines, I will weigh your arguments,
And choose what best my judgment shall approve.
[*To* BURLEIGH
[ Lord Burleigh's honest fears, I know it well,
Are but the offspring of his faithful care;
But yet, Lord Leicester has most truly said,
There is no need of haste; our enemy
Hath lost already her most dangerous sting—
The mighty arm of France: the fear that she
Might quickly be the victim of their zeal
Will curb the blind impatience of her friends. ]

## SCENE IV

*Enter* SIR AMIAS PAULET *and* MORTIMER.

ELIZ. There's Sir Amias Paulet; noble Sir,
What tidings bring you?

PAUL. Gracious Sovereign,
My nephew, who but lately is return'd
From foreign travel, kneels before thy feet.

And offers thee his first and earliest homage.
Grant him thy royal grace, and let him grow
And flourish in the sunshine of thy favour.

MORTIMER (*kneeling on one knee*)
Long live my royal mistress! Happiness
And glory form a crown to grace her brows!

ELIZ. Arise, Sir Knight; and welcome here in England;
You've made, I hear, the tour, have been in France
And Rome, and tarried too some time at Rheims;
Tell me what plots our enemies are hatching?

MORT. May God confound them all! And may the darts
Which they shall aim against my Sovereign,
Recoiling, strike their own perfidious breasts!

ELIZ. Did you see Morgan, and the wily Bishop
Of Ross?

MORT. I saw, my Queen, all Scottish exiles
Who forge at Rheims their plots against this realm.
I stole into their confidence, in hopes
To learn some hint of their conspiracies.

PAUL. Private despatches they entrusted to him,
In cyphers, for the Queen of Scots, which he,
With loyal hand, hath given up to us.

ELIZ Say, what are then their latest plans of treason?

MORT. It struck them all as 'twere a thunderbolt,
That France should leave them, and with England close
This firm alliance; now they turn their hopes
Tow'rds Spain——

ELIZABETH. This, Walsingham hath written us

MORT. Besides, a bull, which from the Vatican
Pope Sixtus lately levell'd at thy throne,
Arriv'd at Rheims, as I was leaving it:
With the next ship, we may expect it here.

LEIC. England no more is frighten'd by such arms.

BUR. They're always dangerous in bigots' hands.

ELIZABETH (*looking stedfastly at* MORTIMER).
Your enemies have said, that you frequented
The schools at Rheims, and have abjur'd your faith

MORT. So I pretended, that I must confess;
Such was my anxious wish to serve my Queen

ELIZABETH (*to* PAULET, *who presents papers to her*).
What have you there?
PAULET 'Tis from the Queen of Scots.
'Tis a petition, and to thee address'd.
BURLEIGH (*hastily catching at it*).
Give me the paper.
PAULET (*giving it to the* QUEEN).
By your leave, my Lord
High Treasurer; the Lady order'd me
To bring it to her Majesty's own hands.
She says, I am her enemy; I am
The enemy of her offences only,
And that which is consistent with my duty
I will, and readily, oblige her in.
[*The* QUEEN *takes the letter: as she reads it,* MORTIMER *and* LEICESTER *speak some words in private.*
BURLEIGH (*to* PAULET).
What may the purport of the letter be?
Idle complaints, from which one ought to screen
The Queen's too tender heart
PAULET What it contains.
She did not hide from me; she asks a boon;
She begs to be admitted to the grace
Of speaking with the Queen.
BURLEIGH. It cannot be.
TAL. . Why not? Her supplication's not unjust.
BUR. . For her, the base encourager of murder;
Her, who hath thirsted for our sov'reign's blood,
The privilege to see the royal presence
Is forfeited: a faithful counsellor
Can never give this treacherous advice.
TAL. And if the Queen is gracious, Sir, are you
The man to hinder pity's soft emotions?
BUR. . She is condemn'd to death: her head is laid
Beneath the axe, and it would ill become
The Queen to see a death-devoted head.
The sentence cannot have its execution
If the Queen's Majesty approaches her,
For pardon still attends the royal presence,
As sickness flies the health-dispensing hand.

ELIZABETH (*having read the letter, dries her tears*).
O! what is man! What is the bliss of earth!
To what extremities is she reduc'd
Who with such proud and splendid hopes began!
Who, call'd to sit on the most ancient throne
Of Christendom, misled by vain ambition,
Hop'd with a triple crown to deck her brows!
How is her language alter'd, since the time
When she assum'd the arms of England's crown,
And by the flatt'rers of her Court was styled
Sole monarch of the two Britannic isles!
Forgive me, Lords, my heart is cleft in twain,
Anguish possesses me, and my soul bleeds
To think that earthly goods are so unstable,
And that the dreadful fate which rules mankind
Should threaten mine own house, and scowl so near me.

TAL . . O, Queen! the God of mercy hath inform'd
Your heart; O! hearken to this heav'nly guidance.
Most grievously, indeed, hath she aton'd
Her grievous crime, and it is time that now,
At last, her heavy penance have an end.
Stretch forth your hand, to raise this abject Queen,
And, like the luminous vision of an angel,
Descend into her gaol's sepulchral night.

BUR. . . Be stedfast, mighty Queen; let no emotion
Of seeming laudable humanity
Mislead thee; take not from thyself the pow'r
Of acting as necessity commands.
Thou *canst* not pardon her, thou *canst* not save her:
Then heap not on thyself the odious blame,
That thou, with cruel and contemptuous triumph,
Didst glut thyself with gazing on thy victim.

LEIC. . Let us, my Lords, remain within our bounds;
The Queen is wise, and doth not need our counsels,
To lead her to the most becoming choice.
This meeting of the Queens hath nought in common
With the proceedings of the Court of Justice.
The law of England, not the monarch's will,
Condemns the Queen of Scotland, and 'twere worthy

Of the great soul of Queen Elizabeth,
To follow the soft dictates of her heart,
Though justice swerve not from its rigid path.

ELIZ. Retire, my Lords.—We shall, perhaps, find means
To reconcile the tender claims of pity
With what necessity imposes on us.
And now retire.—

[*The Lords retire: she calls* SIR EDWARD MORTIMER *back.*

Sir Edward Mortimer!

## SCENE V.

ELIZABETH, MORTIMER.

ELIZABETH (*having measured him for some time, with her eyes in silence*).

You've shown a spirit of advent'rous courage,
And self-possession, far beyond your years.
He who has timely learnt to play so well
The difficult dissembler's needful task
Becomes a perfect man before his time,
And shortens his probationary years.
Fate calls you to a lofty scene of action;
I prophesy it, and can, happily
For you, fulfil, myself, my own prediction.

MORT. Illustrious mistress, what I am, and all
I can accomplish, is devoted to you

ELIZ. You've made acquaintance with the foes of England.
Their hate against me is implacable;
Their fell designs are inexhaustible.
As yet, indeed, Almighty Providence
Hath shielded me; but on my brows the crown
For ever trembles, while *she* lives who fans
Their bigot-zeal, and animates their hopes.

MORT. She lives no more, as soon as you command it.

ELIZ. O, Sir! I thought I saw my labour's end,
And I am come no farther than at first.
I wish'd to let the laws of England act,
And keep my own hands pure from blood's defilement.

The sentence is pronounc'd—what gain I by it?
It must be executed, Mortimer,
And I must authorize the execution.
The blame will ever light on me, I must
Avow it, nor can save appearances.
That is the worst—

MORTIMER. But can appearances
Disturb your conscience where the cause is just?

ELIZ. You are unpractis'd in the world, Sir Knight;
What we appear, is subject to the judgment
Of all mankind, and what we are, of no man.
No one will be convinc'd that I am right:
I must take care that my connivance in
Her death be wrapp'd in everlasting doubt.
In deeds of such uncertain double visage
Safety lies only in obscurity.
Those measures are the worst that stand avow'd,
What 's not abandon'd, is not wholly lost.

MORTIMER (*seeking to learn her meaning*).
Then it perhaps were best—

ELIZABETH (*quick*). Ay, surely 'twere
The best; O, Sir, my better angel speaks
Through you;—go on then, worthy Sir, conclude;
You are in earnest, you examine deep,
Have quite a different spirit from your uncle.

MORTIMER (*surprised*).
Have you imparted then your wishes to him?

ELIZ. I am sorry that I have.

MORTIMER. Excuse his age,
The old man is grown scrupulous; such bold
Adventures ask the enterprising heart
Of youth—

ELIZABETH. And may I venture then on *you*—

MORT. My hand I'll lend thee; save then as thou canst
Thy reputation—

ELIZABETH. Yes, Sir; if you could
But waken me some morning with this news—
"Maria Stuart, your blood-thirsty foe,
Breath'd yesternight her last"—

MORTIMER. Depend on me

ELIZ. When shall my head lie calmly down to sleep?

MORT. The next new moon will terminate thy fears.
ELIZ. And be the selfsame happy day the dawn
Of your preferment—so God speed you, Sir;
And be not hurt, if, chance, my thankfulness
Should wear the mask of darkness.—Silence is
The happy suitor's god.—The closest bonds,
The dearest, are the work of secrecy. [*Exit.*

## SCENE VI.

MORTIMER (*alone*).

Go, false deceitful Queen! As thou deludest
The world, e'en so I cozen thee; 'tis right,
Thus to betray thee; 'tis a worthy deed.
Look I then like a murd'rer? Hast thou read
Upon my brow such base dexterity?
Trust only to *my* arm, and keep thine own
Conceal'd—assume the pious outward show
Of mercy 'fore the world, while reckoning
In secret on my murd'rous aid; and thus
By gaining time we shall ensure her rescue.
Thou wilt exalt me!—show'st me from afar
The costly recompense: but even were
Thyself the prize, and all thy woman's favour,
What art thou, poor one, and what canst thou proffer?
I scorn ambition's avaricious strife,
With *her* alone is all the charm of life,
O'er *her*, in rounds of endless glory, hover
Spirits with grace, and youth eternal bless'd,
Celestial joy is thron'd upon her breast.
Thou hast but earthly, mortal goods to offer—
That sov'reign good, for which all else be slighted.
When heart in heart, delighting and delighted;
Together flow in sweet forgetfulness;—
Ne'er didst thou woman's fairest crown possess,
Ne'er hast thou with thy hand a lover's heart requited.
—I must attend Lord Leicester, and deliver
Her letter to him—'tis a hateful charge—
I have no confidence in this court puppet—
*I* can effect her rescue, *I* alone;
Be danger, honour, and the prize my own.

[*As he is going,* PAULET *meets him.*

## SCENE VII

MORTIMER, PAULET

PAUL. . What said the Queen to you?—
MORTIMER 'Twas nothing, Sir
Nothing of consequence—
PAULET (*looking at him earnestly*). Hear, Mortimer!
It is a false and slipp'ry ground on which
You tread. The grace of princes is alluring,
Youth loves ambition—let not yours betray you.
MORT. Was it not yourself that brought me to the Court?
PAUL. O, would to God I had not done as much!
The honour of *our* house was never reap'd
In courts—stand fast my nephew—purchase not
Too dear, nor stain your conscience with a crime.
MORT. What are these fears? What are you dreaming of?
PAUL. . How high soe'er the Queen may pledge herself
To raise you, trust not her alluring words.
[ The spirit of the world's a lying spirit,
And vice is a deceitful, treach'rous friend.]
She will deny you, if you listen to her;
And, to preserve her own good name, will punish
The bloody deed, which she herself enjoin'd.
MORT. The bloody deed!—
PAULET Away, dissimulation!—
I know the deed the Queen propos'd to you.
She hopes that your ambitious youth will prove
More docile than my rigid age. But say,
Have you then pledg'd your promise, have you?—
MORT. Uncle!
PAUL. . If you have done so, I abandon you,
And lay my curse upon you—
LEICESTER (*entering*). Worthy Sir!
I with your nephew wish a word.—The Queen
Is graciously inclin'd to him; she wills
That to his custody the Scottish Queen
Be with full powers entrusted. She relies
On his fidelity.
PAULET. Relies!—'tis well—
LEIC . What say you, Sir?

PAULET Her Majesty relies
On him; and I, my noble Lord, rely
Upon myself, and my two open eyes. [*Exit*

SCENE VIII

LEICESTER, MORTIMER

LEICESTER (*surprised*). What ailed the Knight?
MORTIMER. My Lord, I cannot tell
What angers him:—the confidence, perhaps,
The Queen so suddenly confers on me.
LEIC. Are you deserving then of confidence?
MORT. . This would I ask of you, my Lord of Leicester.
LEIC. . You said you wish'd to speak with me in private
MORT. . Assure me first that I may safely venture.
LEIC. . Who gives me an assurance on your side?
Let not my want of confidence offend you;
I see you, Sir, exhibit at this court
Two diff'rent aspects; one of them *must* be
A borrow'd one; but which of them is real?
MORT. . The selfsame doubts I have concerning you.
LEIC. . Which, then, shall pave the way to confidence?
MORT. . He who, by doing it, is least in danger
LEIC. . Well, that are you—
MORTIMER. No, you;—the evidence
Of such a weighty, powerful peer as you
Can overwhelm my voice. My accusation
Is weak against your rank and influence.
LEIC . Sir, you mistake. In ev'rything but this
I'm pow'rful here; but in this tender point,
Which I am call'd upon to trust you with,
I am the weakest man of all the Court,
The poorest testimony can undo me.
MORT. If the all-pow'rful Earl of Leicester deign
To stoop so low to meet me, and to make
Such a confession to me, I may venture
To think a little better of myself,
And lead the way in magnanimity.
LEIC. . Lead you the way of confidence, I'll follow.
MORTIMER (*producing suddenly the letter*).
Here is a letter from the Queen of Scotland

LEICESTER (*alarmed, catches hastily at the letter*).
Speak softly, Sir!—what see I?—Oh, it is
Her picture!—
[*Kisses and examines it with speechless joy—a pause.*
MORTIMER (*who has watched him closely the whole time*).
Now, my Lord, I can believe you.
LEICESTER (*having hastily run through the letter*).
You know the purport of this letter, Sir?
MORT.. Not I.—
LEICESTER. Indeed! She surely hath inform'd you.—
MORT.. Nothing hath she inform'd me of. She said
You would explain this riddle to me—'tis
To me a riddle, that the Earl of Leicester,
The far-fam'd fav'rite of Elizabeth,
The open, bitter enemy of Mary,
And one of those who spoke her mortal sentence,
Should be the man from whom the Queen expects
Deliv'rance from her woes; and yet it must be;
Your eyes express too plainly, what your heart
Feels for the hapless lady.—
LEICESTER. Tell me, Sir,
First, how it comes that you should take so warm
An int'rest in her fate; and what it was
Gain'd you her confidence?—
MORTIMER. My Lord, I can,
And in few words, explain this mystery.
I lately have at Rome abjur'd my creed,
And stand in correspondence with the Guises
A letter from the Cardinal Archbishop
Was my credential with the Queen of Scots.
LEIC I am acquainted, Sir, with your conversion;
'Twas that which wak'd my confidence towards you.
[Each remnant of distrust be henceforth banish'd;]
Your hand, Sir, pardon me these idle doubts.
I cannot use too much precaution here.
Knowing how Walsingham and Burleigh hate me,
And, watching me, in secret spread their snares;
You might have been their instrument, their creature
To lure me to their toils.

MORTIMER. How poor a part
Sc great a nobleman is forc'd to play
At court! My Lord, I pity you.
LEICESTER. With joy
I rest upon the faithful breast of friendship,
Where I can ease me of this long constraint.
You seem surpris'd, Sir, that my heart is turn'd
So suddenly towards the captive Queen.
In truth, I never hated her;—the times
Have forc'd me to appear her enemy.
She was, as you well know, my destined bride,
Long since, ere she bestow'd her hand on Darnley
While yet the beams of glory round her smil'd.
Coldly I *then* refused the proffered boon.
*Now* in confinement, at the gates of death,
I claim her, at the hazard of my life.
MORT. True magnanimity, my Lord—
LEICESTER. The state
Of circumstances, since that time, is chang'd
Ambition made me all insensible
To youth and beauty.—Mary's hand I held
Too insignificant for me;—I hoped
To be the husband of the Queen of England
MORT. It is well known she gave you preference
Before all others.
LEICESTER So, indeed, it seem'd.
Now, after ten lost years of tedious courtship,
And hateful self-constraint—O, Sir, my heart
Must ease itself of this long agony.
They call me happy!—Did they only know
What the chains are, for which they envy me!
When I had sacrificed ten bitter years
To the proud idol of her vanity;
Submitted with a slave's humility
To ev'ry change of her despotic fancies;
The plaything of each little wayward whim.
At times by seeming tenderness caressed,
As oft repulsed with proud and cold disdain;
Alike tormented by her grace and rigour:
Watch'd like a pris'ner by the Argus-eyes
Of jealousy; examin'd like a school-boy,

And rail'd at like a servant.—O, no tongue
Can paint this hell —

MORTIMER. My Lord, I feel for you.

LEIC. To lose, and at the very goal, the prize!
Another comes to rob me of the fruits
Of my so anxious wooing. I must lose
To her young blooming husband all those rights
Of which I was so long in full possession;
And I must from the stage descend, where I
So long have play'd the most distinguish'd part.
'Tis not her hand alone this envious stranger
Threatens, he'd rob me of her favour too;
She is a woman, and he form'd to please.

MORT. He is the son of Cath'rine. He has learnt,
In a good school, the arts of flattery.

LEIC. Thus fall my hopes;—I strove to seize a plank
To bear me in this shipwreck of my fortunes,
And my eye turn'd itself towards the hope
Of former days once more; then Mary's image
Within me was renew'd, and youth and beauty
Once more asserted all their former rights.
No more 'twas cold ambition; 'twas my heart
Which now compar'd, and with regret I felt
The value of the jewel I had lost.
With horror I beheld her in the depths
Of misery, cast down by my transgression;
Then wak'd the hope in me, that I might still
Deliver and possess her; I contriv'd
To send her, through a faithful hand, the news
Of my conversion to her interests;
And in this letter which you brought me, she
Assures me that she pardons me, and offers —
Herself as guerdon, if I rescue her.

MORT. But you attempted nothing for her rescue.
You let her be condemn'd without a word;
You gave, yourself, your verdict for her death;
A miracle must happen, and the light
Of truth must move me, *me*, her keeper's nephew
And Heav'n ust, in the Vatican at Rome,
Prepare for her an unexpected succour,
Else had she never found the way to you.

LEIC. . O, Sir! it has tormented me enough!
About this time it was, that they remov'd her
From Talbot's castle, and deliver'd her
Up to your uncle's stricter custody.
Each way to her was shut. I was oblig'd,
Before the world, to persecute her still;
But do not think that I would patiently
Have seen her led to death. No, Sir; I hop'd,
And still I hope, to ward off all extremes,
Till I can find some certain means to save her.
MORT. These are already found: my Lord of Leicester,
Your gen'rous confidence in me deserves
A like return. *I* will deliver her.
That is my object here—my dispositions
Are made already, and your pow'rful aid,
Assures us of success in our attempt.
LEIC. . What say you?—you alarm me—how?—you would—
MORT.. I'll open forcibly her prison-gates:—
I have confederates, and all is ready.
LEIC. . You have confederates, accomplices?
Alas! In what rash enterprise would you
Engage me? And these friends, know they *my* secret?
MORT.. Fear not; our plan was laid without your help,
Without your help it would have been accomplish'd,
Had she not signified her resolution
To owe her liberty to you alone.
LEIC. . And can you then, with certainty, assure me,
That in your plot my name has not been mention'd?
MORT.. You may depend upon it. How, my Lord,
So scrupulous when help is offer'd you?
You wish to rescue Mary, and possess her;
You find confed'rates; sudden, unexpected,
The readiest means fall, as it were from Heav'n,
Yet you show more perplexity than joy
LEIC. . We must avoid all violence; it is
Too dangerous an enterprise.
MORTIMER. Delay
Is also dangerous.
LEICESTER. I tell you, Sir,
'Tis not to be attempted—
MORTIMER, my Lord,

Too hazardous for *you* who would possess her;
But *we*, who only wish to rescue her,
*We* are more bold.

LEICESTER. Young man, you are too hasty
In such a thorny, dangerous attempt.

MORT.. And you too scrupulous in honour's cause.

LEIC. . I see the trammels that are spread around us.

MORT.. And I feel courage to break through them all.

LEIC. . Fool-hardiness and madness, is this courage?

MORT.. This prudence is not bravery, my Lord.

LEIC. . You surely wish to end like Babington.

MORT.. You not to imitate great Norfolk's virtue.

LEIC. . Norfolk ne'er won the bride he woo'd so fondly.

MORT.. But yet he prov'd how truly he deserved her.

LEIC. . If *we* are ruin'd, she must fall with us.

MORT.. If *we* risk nothing, she will ne'er be rescued.

LEIC. . You will not weigh the matter, will not hear;
With blind and hasty rashness you destroy
The plans which I so happily had framed.

MORT.. And what were then the plans which *you* had fram'd?
What have *you* done then to deliver her?
And how, if I were miscreant enough
To murder her, as was propos'd to me
This moment by Elizabeth, and which
She looks upon as certain; only name
The measures *you* have taken to protect her?

LEIC. . Did the Queen give you then this bloody order?

MORT.. She was deceiv'd in me, as Mary is
In you.

LEICESTER. And have you promis'd it; say, have you?

MORT.. That she might not engage another's hand,
I offer'd mine.

LEICESTER. Well done, Sir,—that was right;—
This gives us leisure, for she rests secure
Upon your bloody service, and the sentence
Is unfulfill'd the while, and we gain time.

MORTIMER (*angrily*).
No, we are losing time.

LEICESTER The Queen depends
On you, and will the readier make a show
Of mercy—and I may prevail on her

To give an audience to her adversary;
And by this stratagem we tie her hands:
Yes! I will make the attempt, strain ev'ry nerve.

MORT. And what is gain'd by this? When she discover
That I am cheating her, that Mary lives;
Are we not where we were? She never will
Be free; the mildest doom which can await her
At best, is but perpetual confinement
A daring deed must one day end the matter;
Why will you not with such a deed begin?
The pow'r is in your hands, would you but rouse
The might of your dependents round about
Your many castles, 'twere an host; and still
Has Mary many secret friends. The Howards
And Percies' noble houses, though their chiefs
Be fall'n, are rich in heroes; they but wait
For the example of some potent lord.
Away with feigning—act an open part,
And, like a loyal knight, protect your fair;
Fight a good fight for her! You know you are
Lord of the person of the Queen of England,
Whene'er you will: invite her to your castle,
Oft hath she thither follow'd you—then show
That you're a man—then speak as master—keep her
Confin'd till she release the Queen of Scots.

LEIC. I am astonish'd—I am terrified!—
Where would your giddy madness hurry you?
Are you acquainted with this country? Know you
The deeps and shallows of this court? With wha
A potent spell this female sceptre binds
And rules men's spirits round her? 'Tis in vain
You seek th' heroic energy which once
Was active in this land!—it is subdued,—
A woman holds it under lock and key,
And ev'ry spring of courage is relax'd.
Follow my counsel—venture nothing rashly.
Some one approaches—go—

MORTIMER. And Mary hopes—

Shall I return to her with empty comfort?

LEIC. Bear her my vows of everlasting love

MORT. Bear them yourself! I offer'd my assistance
As her deliv'rer, not your messengor. [*Exit.*

## SCENE IX.

ELIZABETH, LEICESTER

ELIZ. Say who was here? I heard the sound of voices.
LEICESTER (*turning quickly and perplexed round, on hearing the* QUEEN).
It was young Mortimer—
ELIZABETH. How now, my Lord:
Why so confus'd?
LEICESTER (*collecting himself*).
Your presence is the cause.
Ne'er did I see thy beauty so resplendent,
My sight is dazzled by thy heavenly charms.
Oh!—
ELIZABETH. Whence this sigh?
LEICESTER. Have I no reason, then,
To sigh? When I behold you in your glory,
I feel anew, with pain unspeakable,
The loss which threatens me.
ELIZABETH. What loss, my Lord?
LEIC. Your heart—your own inestimable self:—
Soon will you feel yourself within the arms
Of your young ardent husband, highly bless'd·
He will possess your heart, without a rival.
*He* is of royal blood—that am not *I.*
Yet, spite of all the world can say, there lives not
One on this globe, who with such fervent zeal
Adores you, as the man who loses you.
Anjou hath never seen you, can but love
Your glory, and the splendour of your reign;—
But I love *you*—and were you born, of all
The peasant maids the poorest, I the first
Of kings, I would descend to your condition,
And lay my crown and sceptre at your feet!
ELIZ. Oh pity me, my Dudley; do not blame me—
I cannot ask my heart. Oh, *that* had chosen
Far otherwise! Ah, how I envy others

Who can exalt the object of their love!
But I am not so blest:—'tis not my fortune
To place upon the brows of him, the dearest
Of men to me, the royal crown of England.
The Queen of Scotland was allow'd to make
Her hand the token of her inclination;—
*She* hath had ev'ry freedom, and hath drunk,
E'en to the very dregs, the cup of joy.

LEIC. . And now she drinks the bitter cup of sorrow.

ELIZ . She never did respect the world's opinion;—
Life was to her a sport;—she never courted
The yoke to which I bow'd my willing neck.
And yet, methinks, I had as just a claim
As she, to please myself, and taste the joys
Of life:—but I preferr'd the rigid duties
Which royalty imposed on me;—yet *she*,
*She* was the favourite of all the men,
Because she only strove to be a woman;
And youth and age became alike her suitors.
Thus are the men—voluptuaries all!
The willing slaves of levity and pleasure;
Value that least which claims their reverence.
And did not even Talbot, though grey-headed,
Grow young again, when speaking of her charms?

LEIC. . Forgive him—for he was her keeper once,
And she has fool'd him with her cunning wiles.

ELIZ. . And is it really true, that she's so fair?
So often have I been oblig'd to hear
The praises of this wonder—it were well
If I could learn on what I might depend:
Pictures are flattering, and description lies;—
I will trust nothing, but my own conviction.
Why gaze you at me thus?

LEICESTER. I plac'd in thought
You and Maria Stuart, side by side.
Yes! I confess, I oft have felt a wish,
If it could be but secretly contriv'd,
To see you placed beside the Scottish Queen.
Then would you feel, and not till then, the full
Enjoyment of your triumph:—she deserves
To be thus humbled; she deserves to see,

With her own eyes, and envy's glance is keen,
Herself surpass'd, to feel herself o'ermatch'd,
As much by thee in form and princely grace,
As in each virtue that adorns the sex.

ELIZ. . In years she has th' advantage—

LEICESTER. Has she so?
I never should have thought it. But her griefs,
Her sufferings, indeed! 'tis possible,
Have brought down age upon her ere her time.
Yes, and 'twould mortify her more to see thee
As bride—*she* hath already turn'd her back
On each fair hope of life, and she would see thee
Advancing tow'rds the open arms of joy—
See thee as bride of France's royal son
She who hath always plumed herself so high
On her connection with the House of France,
And still depends upon its mighty aid.

ELIZABETH (*with a careless air*).
I'm teaz'd to grant this interview.

LEICESTER. She asks it
As a favour; grant it as a punishment.
For though you should conduct her to the block,
Yet would it less torment her, than to see
Herself extinguish'd by your beauty's splendour.
Thus can you murder her, as she hath wish'd
To murder you. When she beholds your beauty,
Guarded by modesty, and beaming bright,
In the clear glory of unspotted fame,
(Which *she* with thoughtless levity discarded,)
Exalted by the splendour of the crown,
And blooming now with tender bridal graces—
Then is the hour of her destruction come.
Yes—when I now behold you—you were never,
No, never were you so prepar'd to seal
The triumph of your beauty. As but now
You enter'd the apartment, I was dazzled
As by a glorious vision from on high.
Could you but now, now as you are, appear
Before her, you could find no better moment.

ELIZ. . Now?—no—not now—no Leicester—this must be
Maturely weigh'd—I must with Burleigh—

LEICESTER. Burleigh!
To him you are but Sov'reign, and as such
Alone he seeks your welfare; but your rights,
Deriv'd from womanhood, this tender point
Must be decided by your own tribunal,
Not by the statesman:—yet e'en policy
Demands that you should see her, and allure,
By such a gen'rous deed, the public voice.
You can hereafter act as it may please you,
To rid you of the hateful enemy.
ELIZ. But would it then become me to behold
My kinswoman in infamy and want?
They say she is not royally attended;
Would not the sight of her distress reproach me?
LEIC. You need not cross her threshold—hear my counsel:—
A fortunate conjuncture favours it.
The hunt you mean to honour with your presence
Is in the neighbourhood of Fotheringay;
Permission may be giv'n to Lady Stuart
To take the air; you meet her in the park,
As if by accident; it must not seem
To have been plann'd, and should you not incline,
You need not speak to her.
ELIZABETH. If I am foolish,
Be yours the fault, not mine. I would not care
To-day to cross your wishes; for to-day
I've griev'd you more than all my other subjects.
[*Tenderly*
Let it then be your fancy. Leicester, hence
You see the free obsequiousness of love,
Which suffers that which it cannot approve.
[LEICESTER *prostrates himself before her, and the curtain falls.*

## ACT III.

### SCENE I.

*In a Park.—In the foreground Trees; in the background a distant Prospect.*

MARY *advances, running from behind the Trees:* HANNAH KENNEDY *follows slowly.*

KEN. . You hasten on as if endow'd with wings—
I cannot follow you so swiftly—wait.

MARY.. Freedom returns! O let me enjoy it,—
Let me be childish,—be thou childish with me!
Freedom invites me! O let me employ it,
Skimming with winged step light o'er the lea;
Have I escaped from this mansion of mourning?
Holds me no more the sad dungeon of care?
Let me, with joy and with eagerness burning,
Drink in the free, the celestial air!

KEN. O, my dear Lady! but a very little
Is your sad gaol extended; you behold not
The wall that shuts us in; these plaited tufts
Of trees hide from your sight the hated object.

MARY.. Thanks to these friendly trees, that hide from me
My prison walls, and flatter my illusion!
Happy I now may dream myself, and free;
Why wake me from my dream's so sweet confusion?
The extended vault of heaven around me lies,
Free and unfetter'd range my wandering eyes
O'er space's vast immeasurable sea!
From where yon misty mountains rise on high,
I can my empire's boundaries explore;
And those light clouds which, steering southwards, fly
Seek the mild clime of France's genial shore.
Fast fleeting clouds! ye meteors that fly;
Could I but with you sail through the sky!
Tenderly greet the dear land of my youth!
Here I am captive! oppress'd by my foes,
No other than you may carry my woes,
Free thro' the ether your pathway is seen.
Ye own not the power of this tyrant Queen.

KEN. . Alas! dear Lady! You're beside yourself,

This long-lost, long-sought freedom makes you rave

MARY. Yonder's a fisher returning to home; –
Poor though it be, would he lend me his wherry,
Quick to congenial shores would I ferry.
Spare is his trade, and labour's his doom—
Rich would I freight his vessel with treasure,
Such a draught should be his as he never had seen,
Wealth should he find in his nets without measure,
Would he but rescue a poor captive Queen.

KEN. Fond, fruitless wishes! See you not from far,
How we are follow'd by observing spies?—
A dismal, barb'rous prohibition scares
Each sympathetic being from our path.

MARY. No, gentle Hannah! Trust me, not in vain
My prison gates are open'd. This small grace
Is harbinger of greater happiness.
No! I mistake not—'tis the active hand
Of love to which I owe this kind indulgence
I recognise in this the mighty arm
Of Leicester. They will by degrees expand
My prison; will accustom me, through small,
To greater liberty, until at last
I shall behold the face of him whose hand
Will dash my fetters off, and that for ever.

KEN. O, my dear Queen! I cannot reconcile
These contradictions. 'Twas but yesterday
That they announc'd your death, and all at once,
To-day, you have such liberty. Their chains
Are also loos'd, as I have oft been told,
Whom everlasting liberty awaits.

[*Hunting horns at a distance.*

MARY. Hear'st thou the bugle, so blithely resounding?
Hear'st thou its echoes through wood and through plain?
Oh, might I now, on my nimble steed bounding,
Join with the jocund, the frolicsome train!

[*Hunting horns again heard.*

Again! O this sad and this pleasing remembrance!
These are the sounds, which, so sprightly and clear,
Oft, when with music the hounds and the horn,
So cheerfully welcom'd the break of the morn,
On the heaths of the Highlands delighted my ear.

SCENE II

*Enter* PAULET.

PAUL. Well! have I acted right at last, my Lady?
Do I for once, at least, deserve your thanks?
MARY. How! Do I owe this favour, Sir, to you?
PAUL. Why not to me? I visited the Court,
And gave the Queen your letter.
MARY. Did you give it?
In very truth did you deliver it?
And is this freedom which I now enjoy,
The happy consequence?
PAULET (*significantly*). Nor that alone;
Prepare yourself to see a greater still.
MARY. A greater still! What do you mean by that?
PAUL. You heard the bugle-horns?
MARY (*starting back with foreboding apprehension*).
You frighten me—
PAUL. The Queen is hunting in the neighbourhood—
MARY. What!
PAUL. In a few moments she'll appear before you.
KENNEDY (*hastening towards* MARY, *and about to fall*).
How fare you, dearest Lady?—you grow pale.
PAUL. How? Is't not well? Was it not then your pray'r?
'Tis granted now, before it was expected;
You who had ever such a ready speech,
Now summon all your powers of eloquence,
The important time to use them now is come
MARY. O, why was I not told of this before?
Now I am not prepar'd for it—not now—
What, as the greatest favour, I besought,
Seems to me now most fearful:—Hannah, come,
Lead me into the house, till I collect
My spirits.
PAULET. Stay;—you must await her here.
Yes!—I believe you may be well alarm'd
To stand before your judge.

SCENE III.

*Enter the* EARL OF SHREWSBURY

MARY. 'Tis not for that,
O God! Far other thoughts possess me now.

O, worthy Shrewsbury! You come, as though
You were an angel sent to me from heav'n.
I cannot, will not see her. Save me, save me
From the detested sight!

SHREWSBURY. Your Majesty,
Command yourself, and summon all your courage,
'Tis the decisive moment of your fate.

MARY. For years I've waited, and prepared myself.
For this I've studied, weigh'd, and written down
Each word within the tablet of my mem'ry,
That was to touch, and move her to compassion.
Forgotten suddenly, effac'd is all,
And nothing lives within me at this moment,
But the fierce, burning feeling of my wrongs
My heart is turn'd to direst hate against her;
All gentle thoughts, all sweet forgiving words
Are gone, and round me stand with grisly mien,
The fiends of hell, and shake their snaky locks!

SHREW. Command your wild, rebellious blood;—constrain
The bitterness which fills your heart. No good
Ensues, when hatred is oppos'd to hate.
How much soe'er the inward struggle cost,
You must submit to stern necessity,
The pow'r is in her hand, be therefore humble

MARY. To her? I never can.

SHREWSBURY. But pray, submit.
Speak with respect, with calmness! Strive to move
Her magnanimity; insist not, now,
Upon your rights, not now—'tis not the season.

MARY. Ah! wo is me! I've pray'd for my destruction,
And, as a curse to me, my prayer is heard.
We never should have seen each other—never!—
O, this can never, never come to good.
Rather in love could fire and water meet,
The timid lamb embrace the roaring tiger!—
I have been hurt too grievously; she hath
Too grievously oppress'd me;—no atonement
Can make us friends!

SHREWSBURY. First see her, face to face:
Did I not see how she was mov'd at reading
Your letter? How her eyes were drown'd in tears?
No—she is not unfeeling; only place

More confidence in her. It was for this
That I came on before her, to entreat you,
To be collected—to admonish you—

MARY (*seizing his hand*).

Oh, Talbot! you have ever been my friend,
Had I but stay'd beneath your kindly care!
They have, indeed, misused me, Shrewsbury.

SHREW. Let all be now forgot, and only think
How to receive her with submissiveness.

MARY. Is Burleigh with her too, my evil genius?

SHREW. No one attends her but the Earl of Leicester.

MARY. Lord Leicester?

SHREWSBURY. Fear not him; it is not he
Who wishes your destruction;—'twas his work.
That here the Queen hath granted you this meeting

MARY. Ah! well I knew it.

SHREWSBURY. What?

PAULET. The Queen approaches

[*They all draw aside;* MARY *alone remains, leaning on* KENNEDY.

## SCENE IV

*The same,* ELIZABETH, EARL OF LEICESTER, *and Retinue.*

ELIZABETH (*to* LEICESTER).

What seat is that, my Lord?

LEICESTER. 'Tis Fotheringay.

ELIZABETH (*to* SHREWSBURY).

My Lord, send back our retinue to London;
The people crowd too eager in the roads,
We'll seek a refuge in this quiet park.

[TALBOT *sends the train away. She looks stedfastly at* MARY, *as she speaks further with* PAULET.

My honest people love me overmuch.
These signs of joy are quite idolatrous.
Thus should a God be honour'd, not a mortal

MARY (*who the whole time had leaned, almost fainting, on* KENNEDY, *rises now, and her eyes meet the steady, piercing look of* ELIZABETH; *she shudders and throws herself again upon* KENNEDY'S *bosom*).

O God! from out these features speaks no heart.

ELIZ. What lady 's that?—

[*A general, embarrassed silence.*

LEICESTER. You are at Fotheringay,
My Liege!

ELIZABETH (*as if surprised, casting an angry look at* LEICESTER).
Who hath done this, my Lord of Leicester?

LEIC. Tis past, my Queen;—and now that Heav'n hath led
Your footsteps hither, be magnanimous;
And let sweet pity be triumphant now.

SHREW. O royal mistress! yield to our entreaties;
O cast your eyes on this unhappy one,
Who stands dissolved in anguish.

[MARY *collects herself, and begins to advance towards* ELIZABETH, *stops shuddering at half way:—her action expresses the most violent internal struggle.*

ELIZABETH How, my Lords!
Which of you then announc'd to me a prisoner
Bow'd down by woe? I see a haughty one,
By no means humbled by calamity.

MARY. Well be it so:—to this will I submit.
Farewell high thought, and pride of noble mind!
I will forget my dignity, and all
My sufferings; I will fall before *her* feet,
Who hath reduced me to this wretchedness.
[*She turns towards the* QUEEN
The voice of Heav n decides for you, my sister.
Your happy brows are now with triumph crown'd,
I bless the Power Divine, which thus hath rais'd you
[*She kneels*
But in your turn be merciful, my sister;
Let me not lie before you thus disgraced;
Stretch forth your hand, your royal hand, to raise
Your sister from the depths of her distress.

ELIZABETH (*stepping back*).
You are where it becomes you, Lady Stuart;
And thankfully I prize my God's protection,
Who hath not suffer'd me to kneel a suppliant
Thus at your feet, as you now kneel at mine.

MARY (*with increasing energy of feeling*).
Think on all earthly things, vicissitudes.
Oh! there are gods who punish haughty pride
Respect them, honour them, the dreadful ones

Who thus before thy feet have humbled me!
Before these strangers' eyes, dishonour not
Yourself in me: profane not, nor disgrace
The royal blood of Tudor. In my veins
It flows as pure a stream, as in your own.
O! for God's pity, stand not so estranged
And inaccessible, like some tall cliff,
Which the poor shipwreck'd mariner in vain
Struggles to seize, and labours to embrace
My all, my life, my fortune now depends
Upon the influence of my words and tears;
That I may touch your heart, O! set mine free.
If you regard me with those icy looks,
My shudd'ring heart contracts itself, the stream
Of tears is dried, and frigid horror chains
The words of supplication in my bosom!

ELIZABETH (*cold and severe*).

What would you say to me, my Lady Stuart?
You wish'd to speak with me; and I, forgetting
The Queen, and all the wrongs I have sustain'd,
Fulfil the pious duty of the sister,
And grant the boon you wished for of my presence.
Yet I, in yielding to the gen'rous feelings
Of magnanimity, expose myself
To rightful censure, that I stoop so low.
For well you know, you would have had me murder'd

MARY. O! how shall I begin? O, how shall I
So artfully arrange my cautious words,
That they may touch, yet not offend your heart?—
Strengthen my words, O Heav'n! and take from them
Whate'er might wound. Alas! I cannot speak
In my own cause, without impeaching you,
And that most heavily, I wish not so;
You have not, as you ought, behav'd to me;
I am a Queen, like you, yet you have held me
Confin'd in prison. As a suppliant
I came to you, yet *you* in me insulted
The pious use of hospitality;
Slighting in me the holy law of nations,
Immur'd me in a dungeon—tore from me
My friends and servants; to unseemly want

I was exposed, and hurried to the bar
Of a disgraceful, insolent tribunal.
No more of this;—in everlasting silence
Be buried all the cruelties I suffer'd!
See—I will throw the blame of all on fate,—
'Twas not your fault, no more than it was mine
An evil spirit rose from the abyss,
To kindle in our hearts the flames of hate,
By which our tender youth had been divided.
It grew with us, and bad designing men
Fann'd with their ready breath the fatal fire:
Frantics, enthusiasts, with sword and dagger
Arm'd the uncall'd-for hand! This is the curse
Of kings, that they, divided, tear the world
In pieces with their hatred, and let loose
The raging furies of all hellish strife!
No foreign tongue is now between us, sister,
[*Approaching her confidently, and with a flattering tone*
Now stand we face to face; now, sister, speak;
Name but my crime, I'll fully satisfy you,—
Alas! had you vouchsaf'd to hear me then,
When I so earnest sought to meet your eye,
It never would have come to this, nor would,
Here in this mournful place, have happen'd now
This so distressful, this so mournful meeting.

ELIZ. My better stars preserv'd me. I was warn'd,
And laid not to my breast the pois'nous adder!
Accuse not fate! your own deceitful heart
It was, the wild ambition of your house:
As yet no enmities had pass'd between us,
When your imperious uncle, the proud priest,
Whose shameless hand grasps at all crowns, attack'd me
With unprovok'd hostility, and taught
You, but too docile, to assume my arms,
To vest yourself with my imperial title,
And meet me in the lists in mortal strife:
What arms employ'd he not to storm my throne?
The curses of the priests, the people's sword,
The dreadful weapons of religious frenzy;—

Ev'n here in my own kingdom's peaceful haunts,
He fann'd the flames of civil insurrection;—
But God is with me, and the haughty priest
Has not maintain'd the field. The blow was aim'd
Full at my head, but yours it is which falls!

MARY. I'm in the hand of Heav'n. You never will
Exert so cruelly the pow'r it gives you.

ELIZ. Who shall prevent me? Say, did not your uncle
Set all the kings of Europe the example,
How to conclude a peace with those they hate.
Be mine the school of Saint Bartholomew;
What 's kindred then to me, or nations' laws?
The church can break the bands of ev'ry duty;
It consecrates the regicide, the traitor;
I only practise what your priests have taught!
Say then, what surety can be offer'd me,
Should I magnanimously loose your bonds?
Say, with what lock can I secure your faith,
Which by St. Peter's keys cannot be open'd?
Force is my only surety; no alliance
Can be concluded with a race of vipers.

MARY. O! this is but your wretched, dark suspicion!
For you have constantly regarded me
But as a stranger, and an enemy,
Had you declar'd me heir to your dominions,
As is my right, then gratitude and love
In me had fix'd, for you, a faithful friend
And kinswoman.

ELIZABETH. Your friendship is abroad,
Your house is Papacy, the monk your brother.
Name *you* my successor! The treach'rous snare!
That in my life you might seduce my people;
And, like a sly Armida, in your net
Entangle all our noble English youth;
That all might turn to the new rising sun,
And I—

MARY. O sister, rule your realm in peace.
I give up ev'ry claim to these domains—
Alas! the pinions of my soul are lam'd;
Greatness entices me no more: your point
Is gain'd; I am but Mary's shadow now—

My noble spirit is at last broke down
By long captivity:—you've done your worst
On me; you have destroy'd me in my bloom!
Now, end your work, my sister;—speak at length
The word, which to pronounce has brought you hither;
For I will ne'er believe, that you are come,
To mock unfeelingly your hapless victim.
Pronounce this word;—say, "Mary, you are free:
You have already felt my pow'r,—learn now
To honour too my generosity."
Say this, and I will take my life, will take
My freedom, as a present from your hands.
One word makes all undone;—I wait for it;—
O let it not be needlessly delay'd.
Woe to you, if you end not with this word!
For should you not, like some divinity,
Dispensing noble blessings, quit me now,
Then, sister, not for all this island's wealth,
For all the realms encircled by the deep,
Would I exchange my present lot for yours.

ELIZ. And you confess at last, that you are conquer'd:
Are all your schemes run out? No more assassins
Now on the road? Will no adventurer
Attempt again, for you, the sad achievement?
Yes, madam, it is over:—You'll seduce
No mortal more. The world has other cares;—
None is ambitious of the dang'rous honour
Of being your fourth husband:—You destroy
Your wooers like your husbands.

MARY (*starting angrily*). Sister, sister!—
Grant me forbearance, all ye pow'rs of heav'n!

ELIZABETH (*regards her long, with a look of proud contempt*)
Those then, my Lord of Leicester, are the charms
Which no man with impunity can view,
Near which no woman dare attempt to stand?
In sooth, this honour has been cheaply gain'd;
She who to all is common, may with ease
Become the common object of applause

MARY. This is too much!

ELIZABETH (*laughing insultingly*).
You show us now, indeed

Your real face; till now 'twas but the mask.

MARY (*burning with rage, yet dignified and noble*).

My sins were human, and the faults of youth:
Superior force misled me. I have never
Denied or sought to hide it: I despis'd,
All false appearance as became a Queen.
The worst of me is known, and I can say,
That I am better than the fame I bear.
Wo to you! when, in time to come, the world
Shall draw the robe of honour from your deeds,
With which thy arch-hypocrisy has veil'd
The raging flames of lawless secret lust.
Virtue was not your portion from your mother;
Well know we what it was which brought the head
Of Anna Boleyn to the fatal block.

SHREWSBURY (*stepping between both* QUEENS).

O! Heav'n! Alas, and must it come to this!
Is this the moderation, the submission,
My Lady?—

MARY. Moderation! I've supported
What human nature can support: farewell,
Lamb-hearted resignation, passive patience,
Fly to thy native heaven; burst at length
Thy bonds, come forward from thy dreary cave,
In all thy fury, long-suppressed rancour!
And thou, who to the anger'd basilisk
Impart'st the murd'rous glance, O, arm my tongue
With poison'd darts!

SHREWSBURY. She is beside herself!
Exasperated, mad! My Liege, forgive her.

[ELIZABETH, *speechless with anger, casts enraged looks at Mary.*

LEICESTER (*in the most violent agitation; he seeks to lead* ELIZABETH *away*).

Attend not to her rage! Away, away,
From this disastrous place!

MARY (*raising her voice*). A bastard soils,
Profanes the English throne! The gen'rous Britons
Are cheated by a juggler, [whose whole figure
Is false and painted, heart as well as face!]
If right prevail'd, you now would in the dust

Before me lie, for I'm your rightful monarch!
[ELIZABETH *hastily quits the stage; the Lords follow her in the greatest consternation.*

SCENE V.

MARY, KENNEDY.

KEN. . . What have you done? She has gone hence in wrath
All hope is over now!
MARY (*still quite beside herself*).
Gone hence in wrath!
She carries death within her heart! I know it.
[*Falling on* KENNEDY'S *bosom*
Now I am happy, Hannah! and, at last,
After whole years of sorrow and abasement,
One moment of victorious revenge!
A weight falls off my heart, a weight of mountains;
I plung'd the steel in my oppressor's breast!
KEN. . . Unhappy Lady! Frenzy overcomes you.
Yes, you have wounded your invet'rate foe;
'Tis she who wields the light'ning, she is Queen,
You have insulted her before her minion.
MARY. . I have abas'd her before Leicester's eyes;
He saw it, he was witness of my triumph.
How did I hurl her from her haughty height,
He saw it, and his presence strengthen'd me.

SCENE VI.

*Enter* MORTIMER.

KEN. . . O Sir! What an occurrence!
MORTIMER. I heard all—
[*Gives the nurse a sign to repair to her post, and draws nearer; his whole appearance expresses the utmost violence of passion.*
Thine is the palm;—thou trod'st her to the dust!—
Thou wast the Queen, she was the malefactor;—
I am transported with thy noble courage;—
Yes! I adore thee; like a Deity,
My sense is dazzled by thy heav'nly beams.
MARY (*with vivacity and expectation*).
You spoke with Leicester, gave my letter to him.—
My present too?—O speak, Sir.

MORTIMER (*beholding her with glowing looks*).
How thy noble,
Thy royal indignation shone, and cast
A glory round thy beauty; yes, by Heavens,
Thou art the fairest woman upon earth!
MARY. Sir, satisfy, I beg you, my impatience;
What says his Lordship? Say, Sir, may I hope?
MORT. Who?—he?—he is a wretch, a very coward,
Hope nought from him; despise him, and forget him!
MARY. What say you?
MORTIMER. He deliver, and possess you!
Why let him dare it:—he!—he must with me
In mortal contest first deserve the prize!
MARY. You gave him not my letter? Then, indeed,
My hopes are lost!
MORTIMER. The coward loves his life.
Whoe'er would rescue you, and call you his,
Must boldly dare affront e'en death itself!
MARY. Will he do nothing for me?
MORTIMER. Speak not of him.
What can he do? What need have we of him?
I will release you; I alone.
MARY. Alas!
What pow'r have you?
MORTIMER. Deceive yourself no more;
Think not your case is now as formerly;
The moment that the Queen thus quitted you,
And that your interview had ta'en this turn,
All hope was lost, each way of mercy shut.
Now deeds must speak, now boldness must decide;
To compass all must all be hazarded;
You must be free before the morning break.
MARY. What say you, Sir—to-night?—impossible!
MORT. Hear what has been resolv'd:—I led my friends
Into a private chapel, where a priest
Heard our confession, and, for ev'ry sin
We had committed, gave us absolution;
He gave us absolution too, beforehand,
For ev'ry crime we might commit in future.
He gave us too the final sacrament,
And we are ready for the final journey

MARY. O! what an awful, dreadful preparation!
MORT.. We scale, this very night, the castle's walls;
The keys are in my pow'r; the guards we murder!
Then from thy chamber bear thee forcibly.
Each living soul must die beneath our hands,
That none remain who might disclose the deed.
MARY.. And Drury, Paulet, my two keepers, they
Would sooner spill their dearest drop of blood.
MORT.. They fall the very first beneath my steel.
MARY.. What, Sir! Your uncle? How! Your second father!
MORT.. Must perish by my hand—I murder him!
MARY. O, bloody outrage!
MORTIMER. We have been absolv'd
Beforehand; I may perpetrate the worst;—
I can, I will do so!
MARY. O dreadful, dreadful!
MORT.. And should I be oblig'd to kill the Queen,
I've sworn upon the host, it must be done!
MARY.. No, Mortimer; ere so much blood for me.—
MORT.. What is the life of all, compar'd to thee,
And to my love? The bond which holds the world
Together may be loos'd, a second deluge
Come rolling on, and swallow all creation!
Henceforth I value nothing; ere I quit
My hold on thee, may earth and time be ended!
MARY (*retiring*).
Heav'ns! Sir, what language, and what looks! They scare,
They frighten me!
MORTIMER (*with unsteady looks, expressive of quiet madness*).
Life 's but a moment—death
Is but a moment too. Why! let them drag me
To Tyburn, let them tear me limb from limb,
With red-hot pincers—
[*Violently approaching her with extended arms*
If I clasp but thee
Within my arms, thou fervently belov'd!
MARY.. Madman, avaunt!
MORTIMER. To rest upon this bosom,
To press upon this passion-breathing mouth—
MARY.. Leave me, for God's sake, Sir; let me go in—
MORT.. He is a madman who neglects to clasp

His bliss in folds that never may be loosed,
When Heav'n has kindly giv'n it to his arms.
I will deliver you, and though it cost
A thousand lives, I do it: but I swear,
As God 's in Heav'n, I will possess you too!

MARY. O! Will no God, no angel shelter me?
Dread destiny! thou throw'st me, in thy wrath,
From one tremendous terror to the other!
Was I then born to waken nought but frenzy?
Do hate and love conspire alike to fright me?

MORT.. Yes, glowing as their hatred is my love;
They would behead thee, they would wound this neck,
So dazzling white, with the disgraceful axe!
O! offer to the living god of joy
What thou must sacrifice to bloody hate!
Inspire thy happy lover with those charms
Which are no more thine own. Those golden locks
Are forfeit to the dismal pow'rs of death,
O! use them to entwine thy slave for ever!

MARY Alas! alas! what language must I hear!
My wo, my suff'rings should be sacred to you,
Although my royal brows are so no more.

MORT. The crown is fallen from thy brows, thou hast
No more of earthly majesty. Make trial,
Raise thy imperial voice, see if a friend,
If a deliverer will rise to save you.
Thy moving form alone remains, the high,
The godlike influence of thy heav'nly beauty;
This bids me venture all, this arms my hand
With might, and drives me tow'rds the headsman's axe

MARY. O! Who will save me from his raging madness?

MORT. Service that's bold, demands a bold reward.
Why shed their blood the daring? Is not life
Life's highest good? And he a madman, who
Casts life away? First will I take my rest,
Upon the breast that glows with love's own fire!
[*He presses her violently to his bosom*

MARY.. Oh, must I call for help against the man
Who would deliver me!

MORTIMER. Thou'rt not unfeeling,
The world ne'er censur'd thee for frigid rigour;
The fervent pray'r of love can touch thy heart.

Thou mad'st the minstrel Rizzio blest, and gavest
Thyself a willing prey to Bothwell's arms.

MARY. . Presumptuous man!

MORTIMER. *He* was indeed thy tyrant,
Thou trembled'st at his rudeness, whilst thou lov'd'st him;
Well then—if only terror can obtain thee—
By the infernal gods!

MARY. Away—you're mad!

MORT. . I'll teach thee then before *me* too to tremble—

KENNEDY (*entering suddenly*).
They're coming—they approach—the Park is fill'd
With men in arms.

MORTIMER (*starting, and catching at his sword*).
I will defend you—I—

MARY. . O Hannah! save me, save me from his hands.
Where shall I find, poor suff'rer, an asylum?
O! to what saint shall I address my pray'rs?
Here force assails me, and within is murder!
[*She flies towards the house*, KENNEDY *follows her*

SCENE VII.

MORTIMER, PAULET, *and* DRURY *rush in in the greatest consternation.—Attendants hasten over the Stage.*

PAUL. . Shut all the portals—draw the bridges up—

MORT. . What is the matter, uncle?

PAULET. Where is the murd'ress?
Down with her, down into the darkest dungeon!

MORT. . What is the matter? What has pass'd?

PAULET. The Queen!
Accursed hand! Infernal machination!

MORT. . The Queen! What Queen?

PAUL. What Queen!
The Queen of England;—
She has been murder'd on the road to London.
[*Hastens into the house.*

SCENE VIII.

MORTIMER, *soon after*, O'KELLY.

MORTIMER (*after a pause*).
Am I then mad? Came not one running by
But now, and cried aloud, The Queen is murder'd!

No, no! I did but dream. A fev'rish fancy
Paints that upon my mind as true and real,
Which but existed in my frantic thoughts.
Who's there? It is O'Kelly. So dismay'd!

O'KELLY (*rushing in*).
Flee, Mortimer, O! flee—for all is lost!

MORT. . What then is lost?

O'KELLY. Stand not on question Think
On speedy flight.

MORTIMER. What has occurred?

O'KELLY. Sauvage,
That madman, struck the blow.

MORTIMER. It is then true!

O'KEL. True, true—O! save yourself.

MORTIMER (*exultingly*).
The Queen is murder'd—
And Mary shall ascend the English throne!

O'KEL. Is murder'd! Who said that?

MORTIMER. Yourself.

O'KELLY. She lives,
And I, and you, and all of us are lost.

MORT. . She lives!

O'KELLY. The blow was badly aim'd, her cloak
Receiv'd it. Shrewsbury disarm'd the murd'rer.

MORT.. She lives!

O'KELLY. She lives to whelm us all in ruin;
Come, they surround the park already; come—

MORT.. Who did this frantic deed?

O'KELLY. ..... It was the monk
From Toulon, whom you saw immers'd in thought,
As in the chapel the Pope's bull was read,
Which pour'd anathemas upon the Queen.
He wish'd to take the nearest, shortest way,
To free, with one bold stroke, the church of God,
And gain the crown of martrydom:—he trusted
His purpose only to the priest, and struck
The fatal blow upon the road to London.

MORTIMER (*after a long silence*).
Alas! a fierce destructive fate pursues thee,
Unhappy one! Yes—now thy death is fix'd;
Thy very angel has prepar'd thy fall!

O'KEL. Say, whither will you take your flight? I go
To hide me in the forests of the north.
MORT. Fly thither, and may God attend your flight;
I will remain, and still attempt to save
My love; if not, my bed shall be upon her grave.
[*Exeunt at different sides.*

## ACT IV.

### SCENE I.—*Antechamber.*

COUNT AUBESPINE, *the* EARLS *of* KENT *and* LEICESTER

AUB. How fares her Majesty? My Lords, you see me
Still stunn'd, and quite beside myself for terror?
How happen'd it? How was it possible
That, in the midst of this most loyal people—
LEIC. The deed was not attempted by the people.
The assassin was a subject of your king,
A Frenchman.
AUBESPINE. Sure a lunatic.
LEIC. A Papist,
Count Aubespine!

### SCENE II.

*Enter* BURLEIGH *in conversation with* DAVISON.

BURLEIGH. Sir; let the death-warrant
Be instantly made out, and pass the seal;
Then let it be presented to the Queen;
Her Majesty must sign it. Hasten, Sir,
We have no time to lose.
DAVISON. It shall be done. [*Exit.*
AUB. My Lord High Treasurer, my faithful heart
Shares in the just rejoicings of the realm.
Prais'd be almighty Heaven, who hath averted
Assassination from our much-lov'd Queen!
BUR. Prais'd be his name, who thus hath turn'd to scorn
The malice of our foes!
AUBESPINE. May Heav'n confound
The perpetrator of this cursed deed!
BUR. Its perpetrator and its base contriver!
AUB. Please you, my Lord, to bring me to the Queen,
That I may lay the warm congratulations
Of my imperial master at her feet.

BUR. . There is no need of this.
AUBESPINE (*officiously*). My Lord of Burleigh,
I know my duty.
BURLEIGH. Sir, your duty is
To quit, and that without delay, this kingdom.
AUBESPINE (*stepping back with surprise*).
What! How is this?
BURLEIGH. The sacred character
Of an Ambassador to-day protects you,
But not to-morrow.
AUBESPINE. What's my crime?
BURLEIGH. Should I
Once name it, there were then no pardon for it.
AUB. . I hope, my Lord, my charge's privilege—
BUR. . Screens not a traitor.
LEICESTER *and* KENT. Traitor! How?
AUBESPINE. My Lord,
Consider well—
BURLEIGH. Your passport was discover'd
In the assassin's pocket.
KENT. Righteous Heaven!
AUB. . Sir, many passports are subscrib'd by me,
I cannot know the secret thoughts of men.
BUR. . He in your house confess'd, and was absolv'd—
AUB. . My house is open—
BURLEIGH. To *our* enemies.
AUB. . I claim a strict inquiry—
BURLEIGH. Tremble at it—
AUB. . My monarch in my person is insulted,
He will annul the marriage contract.
BURLEIGH. *That*
My royal mistress has annull'd already;
England will not unite herself with France.
My Lord of Kent, I give to you the charge
To see Count Aubespine embark'd in safety.
The furious populace has storm'd his palace,
Where a whole arsenal of arms was found;
Should he be found, they 'll tear him limb from limb,
Conceal him till their fury is abated,—
You answer for his life

AUBESPINE. I go—I leave
This kingdom, where they sport with public treaties,
And trample on the laws of nations. Yet
My monarch, be assur'd, will vent his rage
In direst vengeance!

BURLEIGH. Let him seek it here.

[*Exeunt* KENT *and* AUBESPINE.

## SCENE III

LEICESTER, BURLEIGH.

LEIC. . And thus you loose, yourself, the knot of union
Which you officiously, uncall'd for, bound!
You have deserv'd but little of your country,
My Lord; this trouble was superfluous.

BUR. . My aim was good, though fate declared against it;
Happy is he who has so fair a conscience!

LEIC. . Well know we the mysterious mien of Burleigh,
When he is on the hunt for deeds of treason.
Now you are in your element, my Lord;
A monstrous outrage has been just committed,
And darkness veils, as yet, its perpetrators:—
Now will a court of inquisition rise;
Each word, each look be weigh'd; men's very thoughts
Be summon'd to the bar. You are, my Lord,
The mighty man, the Atlas of the state,
All England's weight lies upon your shoulders.

BUR. . In you, my Lord, I recognise my master;
For such a victory as your eloquence
Has gain'd I cannot boast.

LEICESTER. What means your lordship?

BUR. . You were the man who knew, behind my back,
To lure the Queen to Fotheringay castle.

LEIC. . Behind your back! When did I fear to act
Before your face?

BURLEIGH. *You* led her Majesty?
O, no—*you* led her not—it was the Queen
Who was so gracious as to lead *you* thither

LEIC. . What mean you, my Lord, by that?

BURLEIGH. The noble part
You forc'd the Queen to play! The glorious triumph
Which you prepar'd for her! Too gracious princess!
So shamelessly, so wantonly to mock

Thy unsuspecting goodness, to betray thee
So pitiless to thy exulting foe!
This, then, is the magnanimity, the grace
Which suddenly possess'd you in the council!
The Stuart is for this so despicable,
So weak an enemy, that it would scarce
Be worth the pains to stain us with her blood.
A specious plan! and sharply pointed too;
'Tis only pity this sharp point is broken.

LEIC. Unworthy wretch!—this instant follow me,
And answer at the throne this insolence.

BUR. You'll find me there, my Lord; and look you well.
That *there* your eloquence desert you not. [*Exit*

## SCENE IV

LEICESTER, *alone; then* MORTIMER.

LEIC I am detected! All my plot 's disclos'd!
How has my evil genius track'd my steps!
Alas! if he has proofs, if she should learn
That I have held a secret correspondence
With her worst enemy; how criminal
Shall I appear to her! How false will then
My counsel seem, and all the fatal pains
I took to lure the Queen to Fotheringay!
I've shamefully betray'd, I have exposed her
To her detested enemy's revilings!
O! never, never can she pardon that.
All will appear as if premeditated.
The bitter turn of this sad interview,
The triumph and the tauntings of her rival;
Yes, e'en the murd'rous hand, which had prepar'd
A bloody, monstrous, unexpected fate;
All, all will be ascrib'd to my suggestions!
I see no rescue!—nowhere—Ha! Who comes?

[MORTIMER *enters, in the most violent uneasiness, and looks with apprehension round him.*

MORT Lord Leicester! Is it you? Are we alone?

LEIC. Ill-fated wretch, away! What seek you here?

MORT They are upon our track—upon yours too,
Be vigilant!

LEICESTER. Away, away!

MORTIMER. They know,
That private conferences have been held
At Aubespine's—
LEICESTER. What's that to me?
MORTIMER They know, too,
That the assassin—
LEICESTER. That is your affair—
Audacious wretch! to dare to mix my name
In your detested outrage: go; defend
Your bloody deeds yourself!
MORTIMER. But only hear me.
LEICESTER (*violently enraged*).
Down, down to hell! Why cling you at my heels
Like an infernal spirit! I disclaim you—
I know you not—I make no common cause
With murderers!
MORTIMER. You will not hear me, then!
I came to warn you—*you* too are detected.
LEIC. How! What?
MORTIMER. Lord Burleigh went to Fotheringay,
Just as the luckless deed had been attempted;
Search'd with strict scrutiny the Queen's apartments,
And found there—
LEICESTER. What?
MORTIMER. A letter, which the Queen
Had just addressed to you—
LEICESTER. Unhappy woman!—
MORT.. In which she calls on you to keep your word,
Renews the promise of her hand, and mentions
The picture which she sent you.
LEICESTER. Death and hell!
MORT.. Lord Burleigh has the letter—
LEICESTER. I am lost!
[*During the following speech of* MORTIMER, LEICESTER *goes up and down, as in despair.*
MORT.. Improve the moment; be beforehand with him,
And save yourself—save her! An oath can clear
Your fame; contrive excuses to avert
The worst. *I* am disarm'd, can do no more;
My comrades are dispers'd—to pieces fall'n
Our whole confederacy. For Scotland I,

To rally such new friends as there I may.
'Tis now your turn, my Lord—try what your weight,
What bold assurance can effect.

LEICESTER (*stops suddenly, as if resolved*). I will—
[*Goes to the door, opens it, and calls*
Who waits without? Guards! seize this wretched traitor!
[*To the Officer, who comes in with soldiers.*
And guard him closely! A most dreadful plot
Is brought to light—I'll to her Majesty.

MORTIMER (*stands for a time petrified with wonder; collects himself soon, and follows* LEICESTER *with his looks expressive of the most sovereign contempt*)
Infamous wretch!—But I deserve it all.
Who told me then to trust this practis'd villain?
Now o'er my head he strides, and on my fall
He builds the bridge of safety!—be it so,
Go, save thyself—my lips are seal'd for ever;—
I will not join e'en thee in my destruction—
I would not own thee, no, not e'en in death;
Life is the faithless villain's only good!
[*To the Officer of the Guard, who steps forward to seize him.*
What wilt thou, slave of tyranny, with me?
I laugh to scorn thy threat'nings—I am free.
[*Drawing a dagger.*

OFFIC. He's arm'd;—rush in, and wrest his weapon from him.
[*They rush upon him, he defends himself.*

MORTIMER (*raising his voice*).
And in this latest moment, shall my heart
Expand itself in freedom, and my tongue
Shall break this long constraint. Curse and destruction
Light on you all, who have betray'd your faith,
Your God, and your true Sov'reign! Who, alike
To earthly Mary false as to the heav'nly,
Have sold your duties to this bastard Queen!

OFFIC. Hear you these blasphemies? Rush forward—seize him!

MORT. Beloved Queen! I could not set thee free;
Yet take a lesson from me how to die.

Mary, thou holy one, O! pray for me!
And take me to thy heav'nly home on high!
[*Stabs himself, and falls into the arms of the Guard.*

SCENE V.

*The Apartment of the Queen.*

ELIZABETH, *with a letter in her hand,* BURLEIGH.

. . To lure me thither! trifle with me thus!
The traitor! Thus to lead me, as in triumph,
Into the presence of his paramour!
O, Burleigh! ne'er was woman so deceiv'd.

BUR. I cannot yet conceive what potent means,
What magic he exerted, to surprise
My Queen's accustom'd prudence.

ELIZABETH. O, I die
For shame! How must he laugh to scorn my weakness!
I thought to humble *her*, and was myself
The object of her bitter scorn.

BURLEIGH. By this
You see how faithfully I counsell'd you.

ELIZ. O, I am sorely punish'd, that I turn'd
My ear from your wise counsels; yet I thought
I might confide in him. Who could suspect,
Beneath the vows of faithfullest devotion,
A deadly snare? In whom can I confide,
When he deceives me? He, whom I have made
The greatest of the great, and ever set
The nearest to my heart, and in this court
Allow'd to play the master and the king.

BUR. . Yet in that very moment he betray'd you,
Betray'd you to this wily Queen of Scots.

ELIZ. . O, she shall pay me for it with her life!
Is the death-warrant ready?

BURLEIGH. 'Tis prepar'd
As you commanded.

ELIZABETH. She shall surely die—
He shall behold her fall, and fall himself!
I've driven him from my heart. No longer love,
Revenge alone is there: and high as once
He stood, so low and shameful be his fall!

A monument of my severity,
As once the proud example of my weakness
Conduct him to the Tower; let a commission
Of peers be nam'd to try him. He shall feel
In its full weight the rigour of the law.

BUR. . But he will seek thy presence; he will clear—

ELIZ. . How can he clear himself? Does not the letter
Convict him? O, his crimes are manifest!

BUR. . But thou art mild and gracious! His appearance
His pow'rful presence—

ELIZABETH. I will never see him;
No never, never more. Are orders giv'n,
Not to admit him, should he come?

BURLEIGH. 'Tis done.

PAGE (*entering*).
The Earl of Leicester!

ELIZABETH. The presumptuous man!
I will not see him. Tell him that I will not.

PAGE. . I am afraid to bring my Lord this message,
Nor would he credit it.

ELIZABETH. And I have raised him
So high, that my own servants tremble more
At him than me!

BURLEIGH (*to the* PAGE). The Queen forbids his presence.
[*The* PAGE *retires slowly*

ELIZABETH (*after a pause*).
Yet, if it still were possible? If he
*Could* clear himself? Might it not be a snare
Laid by the cunning one, to sever me
From my best friend—the ever treach'rous harlot!
She might have writ the letter, but to raise
Pois'nous suspicion in my heart, to ruin
The man she hates.

BURLEIGH. Yet, gracious Queen, consider—

## SCENE VI.

LEICESTER (*bursts open the door with violence, and enters with an imperious air*).

LEIC. . Fain would I see the shameless man, who dares
Forbid me the apartments of my Queen!—

ELIZABETH (*avoiding his sight*).
Audacious slave!
LEICESTER. To turn me from the door!
If for a Burleigh she be visible,
She must be so to me!
BURLEIGH. My Lord, you are
Too bold, without permission to intrude—
LEIC My Lord, you are too arrogant, to take
The lead in these apartments. What! Permission!
I know of none, who stands so high at court
As to permit my doings, or refuse them.
[*Humbly approaching* ELIZABETH
'Tis from my Sov'reign's lips alone that *I*—
ELIZABETH (*without looking at him*).
Out of my sight, deceitful, worthless traitor!
LEIC. 'Tis not my gracious Queen I hear, but Burleigh,
My enemy, in these ungentle words.
To my imperial mistress I appeal;
Thou hast lent him thine ear; I ask the like.
ELIZ. Speak, shameless wretch! Increase your crime—deny it—
LEIC Dismiss this troublesome intruder first.
Withdraw, my Lord; it is not of your office
To play the third man here: between the Queen
And me there is no need of witnesses.
Retire—
ELIZABETH (*to* BURLEIGH)
Remain, my Lord; 'tis my command.
LEIC. What has a third to do 'twixt thee and me?
I have to clear myself before my Queen,
My worshipp'd Queen; I will maintain the rights
Which thou hast given me: these rights are sacred,
And I insist upon it, that my Lord
Retire.
ELIZABETH. This haughty tone befits you well.
LEIC. It well befits me; am not I the man,
The happy man, to whom thy gracious favour
Has giv'n the highest station? this exalts me
Above this Burleigh, and above them all.
Thy heart imparted me this rank, and what
Thy favour gave, by Heav'ns I will maintain

At my life's hazard! Let him go, it needs
Two moments only to exculpate me.
ELIZ. . Think not, with cunning words, to hide the truth.
LEIC . That fear from him, so voluble of speech:
But what I say, is to the heart address'd;
And I will justify what I have dar'd
To do, confiding in thy gen'rous favour,
Before thy heart alone. I recognise
No other jurisdiction.
ELIZABETH. Base deceiver!
'Tis this, e'en this, which above all condemns you.
My Lord, produce the letter. [*To* BURLEIGH.
BURLEIGH. Here it is.
LEICESTER (*running over the letter without losing his presence of mind*).
'Tis Mary Stuart's hand—
ELIZABETH. Read, and be dumb!
LEICESTER (*having read it quietly*).
Appearance is against me; yet I hope
I shall not by appearances be judg'd.
ELIZ. Can you deny your secret correspondence
With Mary?—that *she* sent, and *you* receiv'd
Her picture, that you gave her hopes of rescue?
LEIC. It were an easy matter, if I felt
That I were guilty of a crime, to challenge
The testimony of my enemy:
Yet bold is my good conscience. I confess
That she hath said the truth.
ELIZABETH. Well then, thou wretch!
BUR. . His own words sentence him—
ELIZABETH. Out of my sight!
Away! Conduct the traitor to the tow'r!
LEIC. . I am no traitor; it was wrong, I own,
To make a secret of this step to thee;—
Yet pure was my intention, it was done
To search into her plots and to confound them
ELIZ. Vain subterfuge!
BUR. And do you think, my Lord—
LEIC. . I've play'd a dang'rous game, I know it well,
And none but Leicester dare be bold enough
To risk it at this court. The world must know

How I detest this Stuart, and the rank
Which here I hold, my monarch's confidence,
With which she honours me, must sure suffice
To overturn all doubt of my intentions.
Well may the man thy favour above all
Distinguishes, pursue a daring course
To do his duty!

BURLEIGH. If the course was good,
Wherefore conceal it?

LEICESTER. You are us'd, my Lord
To prate before you act—the very chime
Of your own deeds. This is your manner, Lord.
But mine, is first to act, and then to speak

BUR. Yes; now you speak, because you must.

LEICESTER (*measuring him proudly and disdainfully with his eyes*).
And *you*
Boast of a wonderful, a mighty action,
That *you* have sav'd the Queen, have snatch'd away
The mask from treach'ry:—all is known to *you*;
You think, forsooth, that nothing can escape
Your penetrating eyes. Poor, idle boaster!
In spite of all your cunning, Mary Stuart
Was free to day, had *I* not hinder'd it.

BUR. How? *you?*

LEICESTER. Yes *I*, my Lord: the Queen confided
In Mortimer; she open'd to the youth
Her inmost soul! Yes, she went farther still;
She gave him too a secret bloody charge,
Which Paulet had before refus'd with horror.
Say, is it so, or not?
[*The* QUEEN *and* BURLEIGH *look at one another with astonishment.*

BURLEIGH. Whence know you this?

LEIC. Nay, is it not a fact? Now answer me!
And where, my Lord, where were your thousand eyes,
Not to discover Mortimer was false?
That he, the Guise's tool, and Mary's creature,
A raging Papist, daring fanatic,
Was come to free the Stuart and to murder
The Queen of England!

ELIZABETH (*with the utmost astonishment*).
How! This Mortimer?
LEIC. 'Twas he through whom our correspondence pass'd;
This plot it was which introduc'd me to him
This very day she was to have been torn
From her confinement; he, this very moment,
Disclos'd his plan to me: I took him pris'ner,
And gave him to the guard, when in despair
To see his work o'erturn'd, himself unmask'd,
He slew himself!
ELIZABETH. O, I indeed have been
Deceiv'd beyond example, Mortimer!
BUR... This happen'd then but now? Since last we parted?
LEIC. . For my own sake, I must lament the deed—
That he was thus cut off. His testimony,
Were he alive, had fully clear'd my fame,
And freed me from suspicion:—'twas for this
That I surrender'd him to open justice.
I thought to choose the most impartial course
To verify and fix my innocence
Before the world.
BURLEIGH. He kill'd himself, you say!
Is't so? Or did you kill him?
LEICESTER. Vile suspicion!
Hear but the guard who seiz'd him.
[*He goes to the door, and calls*
Ho! Who waits?
[*Enter the Officer of the guard.*
Sir, tell the Queen how Mortimer expir'd.
OFFIC.. I was on duty in the palace porch,
When suddenly my Lord threw wide the door,
And order'd me to take the knight in charge,
Denouncing him a traitor: upon this
He grew enrag'd, and with most bitter curses
Against our sov'reign, and our holy faith,
He drew a dagger, and before the guards
Could hinder his intention, plung'd the steel
Into his heart, and fell a lifeless corpse.
LEIC. . 'Tis well; you may withdraw. Her Majesty
Has heard enough.
[*The Officer withdraws*

ELIZABETH O! what a deep abyss
Of monstrous deeds!
LEICESTER. Who was it then, my Queen,
Who sav'd you? Was it Burleigh? Did he know
The dangers which surrounded you? Did he
Avert them from your head? Your faithful Leicester
Was your good angel.
BURLEIGH. This same Mortimer
Died most conveniently for *you*, my Lord.
ELIZ. . What I should say I know not. I believe you,
And I believe you not:—I think you guilty,
And yet I think you not. A curse on her
Who caus'd me all this anguish!
LEICESTER. She must die—
I now myself consent unto her death.
I formerly advis'd you to suspend
The sentence, till some arm should rise anew
On her behalf; the case has happen'd now,
And I demand her instant execution.
BUR. . . You give this counsel? *You!*
LEICESTER. Howe'er it wound
My feelings to be forc'd to this extreme,
Yet now I see most clearly, now I feel
That the Queen's welfare asks this bloody victim
'Tis my proposal, therefore, that the writ
Be drawn at once, to fix the execution.
BURLEIGH (*to the* QUEEN).
Since then his lordship shows such earnest zeal,
Such loyalty, 'twere well, were he appointed
To see the execution of the sentence.
LEIC. Who? *I!*
BURLEIGH. Yes, *you;* you surely ne'er could find
A better means to shake off the suspicion
Which rests upon you still, than to command
Her, whom 'tis said you love, to be beheaded.
ELIZABETH (*looking stedfastly at* LEICESTER).
My Lord advises well. So be it then!
LEIC. . It were but fit that my exalted rank
Should free me from so mournful a commission,
Which would indeed, in ev'ry sense, become
A Burleigh better than the Earl of Leicester.
The man who stands so near the royal person

Should have no knowledge of such fatal scenes:
But yet, to prove my zeal, to satisfy
My Queen, I wave my charge's privilege,
And take upon myself this hateful duty.

ELIZ. . Lord Burleigh shall partake this duty with you.
[*To* BURLEIGH.
So be the warrant instantly prepar'd.
[BURLEIGH *withdraws; a tumult heard without.*

## SCENE VII.

*The* QUEEN, *the* EARL OF KENT.

ELIZ. . How now, my Lord of Kent? What uproar 's this,
I hear without?

KENT. . My Queen, it is thy people,
Who, round the palace rang'd, impatiently
Demand to see their sov'reign.

ELIZABETH. What 's their wish?

KENT. . A panic terror has already spread
Through London, that thy life has been attempted;
That murderers commission'd from the Pope
Beset thee; that the Catholics have sworn
To rescue from her prison Mary Stuart,
And to proclaim her Queen. Thy loyal people
Believe it, and are mad—her head alone
Can quiet them—this day must be her last.

ELIZ. How! Will they force me then?

KENT. They are resolv'd --

## SCENE VIII.

*Enter* BURLEIGH *and* DAVISON, *with a paper.*

ELIZ. . Well, Davison?

DAV. . (*approaches earnestly*).
Your orders are obey'd,
My Queen—

ELIZABETH. What orders, Sir?
[*As she is about to take the paper, she shudders, and starts back.*
O God!--

BURLEIGH. Obey
Thy people's voice; it is the voice of God.

ELIZABETH (*irresolute, as if in contest with herself*).
O my good Lord, who will assure me now

That what I hear is my whole people's voice,
The voice of all the world! Ah! much I fear,
That, if I now should listen to the wish
Of the wild multitude, a diff'rent voice
Might soon be heard;—and that the very men,
Who now by force oblige me to this step,
May, when 'tis taken, heavily condemn me!

## Scene IX.

*Enter the* Earl of Shrewsbury (*who enters with great emotion*)

Hold fast, my Queen, they wish to hurry thee;
[*Seeing* Davison *with the paper*
Be firm—Or is it then decided?—is it
Indeed decided? I behold a paper
Of ominous appearance in his hand;
Let it not at this moment meet thy eyes,
My Queen!—

Eliz. Good Shrewsbury! I am constrain'd—

Shrew. Who can constrain thee? Thou art Queen of England,
Here must thy Majesty assert its rights:
Command those savage voices to be silent,
Who take upon themselves to put constraint
Upon thy royal will, to rule thy judgment.
Fear only, blind conjecture, moves thy people;
Thou art thyself beside thyself; thy wrath
Is grievously provok'd: thou art but mortal,
And canst not thus ascend the judgment seat.

Bur. Judgment has long been past. It is not now
The time to speak, but execute the sentence.

Kent (*who, on* Shrewsbury's *entry, had retired, comes back*).
The tumult gains apace; there are no means
To moderate the people

Elizabeth (*to* Shrewsbury). See, my Lord,
How they press on.

Shrewsbury. I only ask a respite;
A single word trac'd by thy hand decides
The peace, the happiness of all thy life!
Thou hast for years consider'd, let not then
A moment rul'd by passion hurry thee--
But a short respite—recollect thyself!
Wait for a moment of tranquillity.

BURLEIGH (*violently*).
Wait for it—pause—delay—till flames of fire
Consume the realm; until the fifth attempt
Of murder be successful! God, indeed,
Hath thrice deliver'd thee; thy late escape
Was marvellous, and to expect again
A miracle, would be to tempt thy God!

SHREW. That God, whose potent hand hath thrice preserved thee,
Who lent my aged feeble arm the strength
To overcome the madman:—he deserves
Thy confidence. I will not raise the voice
Of justice now, for now is not the time;
Thou canst not hear it in this storm of passion.
Yet listen but to this! Thou tremblest now
Before this living Mary—tremble rather
Before the murder'd, the beheaded Mary
She will arise, and quit her grave, will range
A fiend of discord, an avenging ghost
Around thy realm, and turn thy people's hearts
From their allegiance. For as yet the Britons
Hate her, because they fear her; but most surely
Will they avenge her, when she is no more.
They will no more behold the enemy
Of their belief, they will but see in her
The much-lamented issue of their kings
A sacrifice to jealousy and hate.
Then quickly shalt thou see the sudden change
When thou hast done the bloody deed; then go
Through London, seek thy people, which till now
Around thee swarm'd delighted; thou shalt see
Another England, and another people;
For then no more the godlike dignity
Of justice, which subdued thy subjects' hearts,
Will beam around thee. Fear, the dread ally
Of tyranny, will shudd'ring march before thee,
And make a wilderness in ev'ry street—
The last, extremest crime thou hast committed.
What head is safe, if the anointed fall?

ELIZ. Ah! Shrewsbury, you sav'd my life, you turn'd
The murd'rous steel aside; why let you not

The dagger take its course? then all these broils
Would have been ended; then, releas'd from doubt,
And free from blame, I should be now at rest
In my still peaceful grave. In very sooth,
I'm weary of my life, and of my crown.
If Heav'n decree that one of us two Queens
Must perish, to secure the other's life—
And sure it must be so—why should not I
Be she who yields? My people must decide;
I give them back the Sovereignty they gave.
God is my witness, that I have not liv'd
For my own sake, but for my people's welfare.
If they expect from this false, fawning Stuart,
The younger sovereign, more happy days,
I will descend with pleasure from the throne,
Again repair to Woodstock's quiet bowers,
Where once I spent my unambitious youth;
Where far remov'd from all the vanities
Of earthly power, I found within myself
True Majesty. I am not made to rule—
A ruler should be made of sterner stuff:
My heart is soft and tender. I have govern'd
These many years, this kingdom happily,
But then I only needed to make happy:
Now, comes my first important regal duty,
And now I feel how weak a thing I am.

BUR. Now by mine honour, when I hear my Queen,
My royal liege, speak such unroyal words,
I should betray my office, should betray
My country, were I longer to be silent.
You say you love your people 'bove yourself,
Now prove it. Choose not peace for your own heart,
And leave your kingdom to the storms of discord.
Think on the church. Shall, with this Papist Queen
The ancient superstition be renew'd?
The monk resume his sway, the Roman legate
In pomp march hither; lock our churches up,
Dethrone our monarchs? I demand of you
The souls of all your subjects—as you now
Shall act, they all are sav'd, or all are lost!
Here is no time for mercy;—to promote
Your people's welfare is your highest duty.

If Shrewsbury has sav'd your life, then I
Will save both you, and England—that is more!

ELIZ. . I would be left alone. No consolation,
No counsel, can be drawn from human aid
In this conjuncture:—I will lay my doubts
Before the Judge of all:—I am resolv'd
To act as He shall teach. Withdraw, my Lords.
[*To* DAVISON, *who lays the paper on the table.*
You, Sir, remain in waiting—close at hand.
[*The Lords withdraw;* SHREWSBURY *alone stands for a few moments before the* QUEEN, *regards her significantly, then withdraws slowly, and with an expression of the deepest anguish.*

## SCENE X.

ELIZABETH *alone.*

O! servitude of popularity!
Disgraceful slavery! How weary am I
Of flattering this idol, which my soul
Despises in its inmost depth! O! when
Shall I once more be free upon this throne?
I must respect the people's voice, and strive
To win the favour of the multitude,
And please the fancies of a mob, whom nought
But jugglers' tricks delight. O call not him
A king, who needs must please the world: 'tis he
Alone, who in his actions does not heed
The fickle approbation of mankind
Have I then practis'd justice, all my life
Shunn'd each despotic deed; have I done this,
Only to bind my hands against this first,
This necessary act of violence?
My own example now condemns myself!
Had I but been a tyrant, like my sister,
My predecessor, I could fearless then
Have shed this royal blood:—but am I now
Just by my own free choice? No—I was forc'd
By stern necessity to use this virtue;
Necessity, which binds e'en monarchs' wills.
Surrounded by my foes, my people's love
Alone supports me on my envied throne.
All Europe's pow'rs confederate to destroy me;

The Pope's inveterate decree declares me
Accurst and excommunicated. France
Betrays me with a kiss, and Spain prepares
At sea a fierce exterminating war;
Thus stand I, in contention with the world,
A poor defenceless woman: I must seek
To veil the spot in my imperial birth,
By which my father cast disgrace upon me:
In vain with princely virtues would I hide it;
The envious hatred of my enemies
Uncovers it, and places Mary Stuart
A threat'ning fiend before me evermore!
[*Walking up and down, with quick and agitated steps.*
O no! this fear must end. Her head must fall!
I *will* have peace. She is the very fury
Of my existence; a tormenting demon,
Which destiny has fasten'd on my soul.
Wherever I had planted me a comfort,
A flatt'ring hope, my way was ever cross'd
By this infernal viper! She has torn
My fav'rite, and my destined bridegroom from me.
The hated name of ev'ry ill I feel
Is Mary Stuart—were but she no more
On earth, I should be free as mountain air.
[*Standing still.*
With what disdain did she look down on me,
As if her eye should blast me like the lightning!
Poor feeble wretch! I bear far other arms,
Their touch is mortal, and thou art no more.
[*Advancing to the table hastily, and taking the pen.*
I am a bastard am I? Hapless wretch,
I am but so the while thou liv'st and breath'st.
[Thy death will make my birth legitimate.]
The moment I destroy thee, is the doubt
Destroy'd, which hangs o'er my imperial right.
As soon as England has no other choice,
My mother's honour and my birthright triumphs.
[*She signs with resolution; lets her pen then fall, and steps back with an expression of terror.—After a pause she rings.*

## Scene XI.

ELIZABETH, DAVISON.

ELIZ. Where are their Lordships?
DAVISON They are gone to quell
The tumult of the people. The alarm
Was instantly appeas'd, when they beheld
The Earl of Shrewsbury. That 's he! exclaim'd
A hundred voices—that 's the man—he sav'd
The Queen; hear *him*—the bravest man in England!
And now began the gallant Talbot, blam'd
In gentle words the people's violence,
And used such strong, persuasive eloquence,
That all were pacified, and silently
They slunk away.
ELIZABETH. The fickle multitude!
Which turns with ev'ry wind. Unhappy he
Who leans upon this reed! 'Tis well, Sir William;
You may retire again—
[*As he is going towards the door*
And, Sir, this paper,
Receive it back; I place it in your hands.
DAVISON (*casts a look upon the paper, and starts back*).
My gracious Queen—thy name!—'tis then decided.
ELIZ. I had but to subscribe it—I have done so—
A paper sure cannot decide—a name
Kills not—
DAVISON. Thy name, my Queen, beneath this paper,
Is most decisive—kills—'tis like the lightning,
Which blasteth as it flies! This fatal scroll
Commands the Sheriff and Commissioners
To take departure straight for Fotheringay,
And to the Queen of Scots announce her death,
Which must at dawn be put in execution.
There is no respite, no discretion, here—
As soon as I have parted with this writ,
Her race is run—
ELIZABETH. Yes, Sir, the Lord has plac'd
This weighty bus'ness in your feeble hands;
Seek him in pray'r, to light you with his wisdom;
I go—and leave you, Sir, to do your duty. [*Going*

DAV . . No; leave me not, my Queen, till I have heard
Your will. The only wisdom that I need
Is, word for word, to follow your commands.
Say, have you plac'd this warrant in my hands.
To see that it be speedily enforced?
ELIZ. . That you must do, as your own prudence dictates
DAVISON (*interrupting her quickly, and alarmed*).
Not mine—O God forbid! Obedience is
My only prudence here. No point must now
Be left to be decided by your servant.
A small mistake would here be regicide,
A monstrous crime, from which my soul recoils!
Permit me, in this weighty act, to be
Your passive instrument, without a will;—
Tell me in plain undoubted terms your pleasure,
What with the bloody mandate I should do.
ELIZ. . Its name declares its meaning.
DAVISON Do you, then.
My Liege, command its instant execution?
ELIZ. . I said not that; I tremble but to think it.
DAV. . . Shall I retain it, then, 'till further orders?
ELIZ. . At your own risk; you answer the event.
DAV. . . I!—gracious Heavens!—O speak, my Queen, your pleasure!
ELIZ. . My pleasure is, that this unhappy bus'ness
Be no more mention'd to me; that at last
I may be freed from it, and that for ever.
DAV. . . It costs you but a word—determine then;
What shall I do with this mysterious scroll?
ELIZ. . I *have* declar'd it, plague me, Sir, no longer.
DAV. . You *have* declar'd it? say you? O, my Queen,
You have said nothing. Please my gracious mistress
But to remember—
ELIZABETH (*stamps on the ground*).
Insupportable!
DAV. . . O, be indulgent to me! I have enter'd
Unwittingly, not many months ago,
Upon this office; I know not the language
Of courts and kings. I ever have been rear'd
In simple, open wise, a plain blunt man
Be patient with me; nor deny your servant

A light to lead him clearly to his duty.
[*He approaches her in a supplicating posture. she turns her back on him; he stands in despair; then speaks with a tone of resolution.*
Take, take again this paper—take it back!
Within my hands, it is a glowing fire.
Select not me, my Queen; select not me
To serve you, in this terrible conjuncture.

ELIZ. Go, Sir;—fulfil the duty of your office! [*Exit*

## SCENE XII.

DAVISON, *then* BURLEIGH.

DAV. She goes! She leaves me doubting, and perplex'd
With this dread paper! How to act I know not;
Should I retain it, should I forward it?
[*To* BURLEIGH, *who enters.*
Oh! I am glad that you are come, my Lord,
'Tis you who have preferr'd me to this charge;
Now free me from it, for I undertook it,
Unknowing how responsible it made me.
Let me then seek again th' obscurity
In which you found me; this is not my place.

BUR. . . How now? Take courage, Sir! Where is the warrant?
The Queen was with you.

DAVISON. She has quitted me
In bitter anger. O advise me, help me,
Save me from this fell agony of doubt!
My Lord, here is the warrant: it is sign'd!

BUR. . . Indeed? O give it, give it me!

DAVISON. I may not.

BUR. . . How!

DAV. . . She has not yet explain'd her final will.

BUR . . Explain'd! She has subscrib'd it;—give it me.

DAV. . . I am to execute it, and I am not.
Great Heavens! I know not what I am to do!

BURLEIGH (*urging more violently*)
It must be now, this moment, executed—
The warrant, Sir. You're lost if you delay.

DAV. . . So am I also, if I act too rashly.

BUR. . . What strange infatuation. Give it me.
[*Snatches the paper from him, and exit with it.*

DAV. . . What would you? Hold! You will be my destruction!

## ACT V.

### SCENE I.

*The Scene the same as in the First Act.*

HANNAH KENNEDY *in deep mourning, her eyes still red from weeping in great but quiet anguish, is employed in sealing letters and parcels. Her sorrow often interrupts her occupation, and she is seen at such intervals to pray in silence* PAULET *and* DRURY, *also in mourning, enter, followed by many servants, who bear golden and silver vessels, mirrors, paintings, and other valuables, and fill the back part of the stage with them:* PAULET *delivers to the Nurse a box of jewels and a paper, and seems to inform her by signs, that it contains the inventory of the effects the* QUEEN *had brought with her. At the sight of these riches, the anguish of the Nurse is renewed; she sinks into a deep, gloomy melancholy, during which* DRURY, PAULET, *and the Servants, silently retire.*

MELVIL *enters.*

KENNEDY (*screams aloud, as soon as she observes him*).
Melvil! Is't you? Behold I you again?

MEL. . Yes, faithful Kennedy, we meet once more.

KEN. . After this long, long, painful separation!

MEL. . A most unhappy, bitter meeting, this!

KEN. . You come—

MELVIL. To take an everlasting leave
Of my dear Queen—to bid a last farewell!

KEN. . And now at length, now on the fatal morn
Which brings her death, they grant our royal Lady
The presence of her friends. O, worthy Sir,
I will not question you, how you have far'd,
Nor tell you all the suff'rings we've endured,
Since you were torn away from us:—alas!
There will be time enough for that hereafter.
O, Melvil, Melvil, why was it our fate
To see the dawn of this unhappy day!

MEL. . Let us not melt each other with our grief.
Throughout my whole remaining life, as long
As ever it may be, I'll sit and weep;

A smile shall never more light up these cheeks,
Ne'er will I lay this sable garb aside,
But lead henceforth a life of endless mourning.
Yet on this last sad day, I will be firm;
Pledge me your word to moderate your grief;
And when the rest, of comfort all bereft,
Abandon'd to despair, wail round her, we
Will lead her with heroic resolution,
And be her staff upon the road to death!

KEN. Melvil! You are deceiv'd, if you suppose
The Queen has need of our support to meet
Her death with firmness. *She* it is, my friend,
Who will exhibit the undaunted heart.
O! trust me, Mary Stuart will expire
As best becomes a Heroine and Queen!

MEL. Receiv'd she firmly, then, the sad decree
Of death?—'tis said, that she was not prepar'd.

KEN. She was not; yet they were far other terrors
Which made our Lady shudder: 'twas not death,
But her deliverer, which made her tremble.
Freedom was promis'd us; this very night
Had Mortimer engag'd to bear us hence:
And thus the Queen, perplex'd 'twixt hope and fear,
And doubting still if she should trust her honour
And royal person to th' advent'rous youth,
Sat waiting for the morning. On a sudden
We hear a boist'rous tumult in the castle;
Our ears are startled by repeated blows
Of many hammers, and we think we hear
The approach of our deliv'rers:—hope salutes us,
And suddenly and unresisted, wakes
The sweet desire of life And now at once
The portals are thrown open—it is Paulet,
Who comes to tell us--that—the carpenters
Erect beneath our feet the murd'rous scaffold!

[*She turns aside, overpowered by excessive anguish.*

MEL. O God in Heav'n! O tell me then, how bore
The Queen this terrible vicissitude?

KENNEDY (*after a pause, in which she has somewhat collected herself*).
Not by degrees can we relinquish life;

Quick, sudden, in the twinkling of an eye
The separation must be made, the change
From temporal, to eternal life;—and God
Imparted to our mistress at this moment
His grace, to cast away each earthly hope,
And firm and full of faith to mount the skies.
No sign of pallid fear dishonour'd her;
No word of mourning, 'till she heard the tidings
Of Leicester's shameful treach'ry, the sad fate
Of the deserving youth, who sacrificed
Himself for her: the deep, the bitter anguish
Of that old knight, who lost, through her, his last,
His only hope; till then she shed no tear,—
'Twas then her tears began to flow, 'twas not
Her own, but others' wo which wrung them from her

MEL. . Where is she now? Can you not lead me to her?

KEN. . She spent the last remainder of the night
In pray'r, and from her dearest friends she took
Her last farewell in writing:—then she wrote
Her will* with her own hand. She now enjoys
A moment of repose, the latest slumber
Refreshes her weak spirits.

MELVIL. Who attends her?

KEN. . None but her women and physician Burgoyn:
You seem to look around you with surprise;
Your eyes appear to ask me what should mean
This show of splendour in the house of death.
O, Sir, while yet we lived we suffer'd want;
But at our death plenty returns to us.

SCENE II

*Enter* MARGARET CURL.

KEN. . How, Madam, fares the Queen? Is she awake?

CURL (*drying her tears*).
She is already dressed—she asks for you.

KEN. . I go;—
[*To* MELVIL, *who seems to wish to accompany her*
But follow not, until the Queen
Has been prepar'd to see you. [*Exit*

CURL. Melvil, sure,
The ancient steward?

* The document is now in the British Museum.

MELVIL. Yes, the same
CURL. O, Sir,
This is a house which needs no steward now!
Melvil, you come from London; can you give
No tidings of my husband?
MELVIL. It is said
He will be set at liberty, as soon—
CURL. . As soon as our dear Queen shall be no more.
O, the unworthy, the disgraceful traitor!
He is our Lady's murderer—'tis said
It was his testimony which condemn'd her.
MEL. . 'Tis true
CURL. O, curse upon him!—be his soul
Condemn'd for ever!—he has borne false witness--
MEL. . Think, Madam, what you say.
CURL. I will maintain it
With ev'ry sacred oath, before the court,
I will repeat it in his very face;
The world shall hear of nothing else. I say
That she dies innocent!
MELVIL. God grant it true!

## SCENE III.

*Enter* HANNAH KENNEDY.

KENNEDY (*to* CURL).
Go, Madam, and require a cup of wine—
'Tis for our Lady.
MELVIL. Is the Queen then sick?
KEN. . She thinks that she is strong; she is deceiv'd
By her heroic courage; she believes
She has no need of nourishment; yet still
A hard and painful task 's allotted her.
Her enemies shall not enjoy the triumph;
They shall not say that fear hath blanch'd her cheeks,
When her fatigues have conquer'd human weakness.
MEL. May I approach her?
KENNEDY. She will come herself.

## SCENE IV.

*Enter* BURGOYN; *two women of the chamber follow him, weeping, and in deep mourning.*

BURG. . O, Melvil!

MELVIL. O, Burgoyn! [*They embrace silently.*
FIRST WOMAN (*to the* NURSE). She chose to be
Alone:—she wishes, at this awful moment,
For the last time, to commune with her God.

SCENE V.

*Enter* MARGARET CURL, *bearing a golden cup of wine; she places it hastily upon the table, and leans, pale and trembling, against a chair.*

MEL. . How, Madam! What has frighten'd you?
KENNEDY. O God!
BURG. . Speak, Madam.
CURL. What, alas! have I beheld!
MEL. . Come to yourself, and say what you have seen!
CURL. . As I went down the staircase which conducts
To the great hall below, a door stood open;
I look'd into the chamber, and I saw—
O Heav'n!
MELVIL. What saw you?
CURL. All the walls were hung
With black; a spacious scaffold too o'erspread
With sable cloth, was rais'd above the floor,
And in the middle of the scaffold stood
A dreadful sable block! upon it lay
A naked, polish'd axe:—the hall was full
Of cruel people, crowding round the scaffold;
Who, with a horrid thirst for human blood,
Seem'd waiting for the victim!
THE WOMEN. Gracious Heav'n
Protect our Queen!
MELVIL. Be calm; the Queen approaches

SCENE VI.

*Enter* MARY *in white and sumptuously arrayed, as for a festival: she wears hanging from her neck, on a row of small beads an Agnus Dei; a rosary hangs from her girdle; she bears a crucifix in her hand, and a diadem of precious stones binds her hair; her large black veil is thrown back. On her entrance, all present fall back on both sides with the most violent expressions of anguish.* MELVIL *falls involuntarily upon his knees*

MARY (*with quiet majesty, looking round the whole circle*).
Why these complaints? Why weep ye? Ye should rather
Rejoice with me, that now at length the end
Of my long wo approaches; that my shackles
Fall off, my prison opens, and my soul
Delighted mounts on seraph's wings, and seeks
The land of everlasting liberty.
When I was offer'd up to the oppression
Of my proud enemy, was forc'd to suffer
Ignoble taunts, and insults most unfitting
A free and sov'reign Queen, then was the time
To weep for me; but, as an earnest friend,
Beneficent and healing Death approaches.
All the indignities which I have suffer'd
On earth, are cover'd by his sable wings
The most degraded criminal 's ennobled
By his last suff'rings, by his final exit;
I feel again the crown upon my brows.
And dignity possess my swelling soul!
[*Advancing a few steps*
How! Melvil here! My worthy Sir, not so;
Arise; you rather come in time to see
The triumph of your mistress, than her death
One comfort, which I never had expected,
Is granted me,- that, after death, my name
Will not be quite abandon'd to my foes;
One friend at least, one partner of my faith,
Will be my witness in the hour of death.
Say, honest Melvil, how you far'd the while
In this inhospitable, hostile land?
For since the time they tore you from my side,
My fears for you have oft depress'd my soul.

MEL. . No other evil gall'd me, but my grief
For thee, and that I wanted pow'r to serve thee

MARY . How fares my chamberlain, old Didier?
But sure the faithful servant long has slept
The sleep of death, for he was full of years

MEL. . God hath not granted him as yet this grace;
He lives to see the grave o'erwhelm thy youth.

MARY. . O! Could I but have felt before my death,

The happiness of pressing one descendant
Of the dear blood of Stuart to my bosom.
But I must suffer in a foreign land,
None but my servants to bewail my fate!
Sir; to your loyal bosom I commit
My latest wishes. Bear then, Sir, my blessing
To the most Christian king, my royal brother,
And the whole royal family of France.
I bless the cardinal, my honour'd uncle,
And also Henry Guise, my noble cousin.
I bless the holy Father, the vicegerent
Of Christ on earth, who will, I trust, bless me.
I bless the King of Spain, who nobly offer'd
Himself as my deliv'rer, my avenger.
They are remember'd in my will: I hope
That they will not despise, how poor soe'er
They be, the presents of a heart which loves them
[*Turning to her servants*
I have bequeath'd you to my royal brother
Of France; he will protect you, he will give you
Another country, and a better home;
And if my last desire have any weight,
Stay not in England; let no haughty Briton
Glut his proud heart with your calamities,
Nor see those in the dust, who once were mine.
Swear by this image of our suffring Lord,
To leave this fatal land, when I'm no more.

MELVIL (*touching the crucifix*).
I swear obedience, in the name of all.

MARY. What I, though poor and plunder'd, still possess,
Of which I am allow'd to make disposal,
Shall be amongst you shar'd; for I have hope
In this at least, my will may be fulfill'd.
And what I wear upon the way to death,
Is yours—nor envy me on this occasion,
The pomp of earth upon the road to heav'n.
[*To the ladies of her chamber*
To you, my Alice, Gertrude, Rosamund,
I leave my pearls, my garments: you are young,
And ornament may still delight your hearts.
You, Margaret, possess the nearest claims,
To you I should be gen'rous: for I leave you

The most unhappy woman of them all.
That I have not aveng'd your husband's fault
On you, I hope my legacy will prove.
The worth of gold, my Hannah, charms not thee;
Nor the magnificence of precious stones:
My memory, I know will be to thee
The dearest jewel; take this handkerchief,
I work'd it for thee, in the hours of sorrow,
With my own hands, and my hot scalding tears
Are woven in the texture:—you will bind
My eyes with this, when it is time: this last
Sad service I would wish but from my Hannah.

KEN. O Melvil! I cannot support it.

MARY. Come,
Come all, and now receive my last farewell.

[*She stretches forth her hands; the* WOMEN *violently weeping, fall successively at her feet, and kiss her outstretched hand.*

Marg'ret farewell—my Alice, fare thee well;
Thanks Burgoyn, for thy honest faithful service—
Thy lips are hot, my Gertrude:—I have been
Much hated, yet have been as much belov'd.
May a deserving husband bless my Gertrude,
For this warm glowing heart is form'd for love.
Bertha, thy choice is better, thou hadst rather
Become the chaste and pious bride of heav'n;—
O! haste thee to fulfil thy vows;—the goods
Of earth are all deceitful;—thou may'st learn
This lesson from thy Queen. No more; farewell,
Farewell, farewell, my friends, farewell for ever.

[*She turns suddenly from them; all but* MELVIL *retire at different sides.*

## SCENE VII.

MARY, MELVIL.

MARY (*after the others are all gone*).
I have arrang'd all temporal concerns,
And hope to leave the world in debt to none;
Melvil, one thought alone there is, which binds
My troubled soul, nor suffers it to fly
Delighted, and at liberty, to heav'n

MEL. . Disclose it to me; ease your bosom, trust
Your doubts, your sorrows to your faithful friend
MARY. . I see eternity's abyss before me;—
Soon must I stand before the highest judge
And have not yet appeas'd the Holy One.
A priest of my religion is denied me.
And I disdain to take the sacrament,
The holy, heav'nly nourishment, from priests
Of a false faith; I die in the belief
Of my own church, for that alone can save.
MEL. . Compose your heart; the fervent pious wish
Is priz'd in heaven as high as the performance.
The might of tyrants can but bind the hands,
The heart's devotion rises free to God,
The word is dead—'tis faith which brings to life
MARY The heart is not sufficient of itself;
Our faith must have some earthly pledge to ground
Its claims to the high bliss of heav'n. For this
Our God became incarnate, and inclos'd
Mysteriously his unseen heav'nly grace
Within the outward figure of a body.
The church it is, the holy one, the high one,
Which rears for us the ladder up to heav'n:—
'Tis call'd the Catholic—apostolic church,—
For 'tis but gen'ral faith can strengthen faith;
Where thousands worship and adore, the heat
Breaks out in flame, and borne on eagle wings,
The soul mounts upwards to the heav'n of heav'ns
Ah! happy they, who for the glad communion
Of pious pray'r, meet in the house of God!
The altar is adorn'd, the tapers blaze,
The bell invites, the incense soars on high,
The bishop stands enrob'd, he takes the cup,
And blessing it declares the solemn mystery,
The transformation of the elements;
And the believing people fall delighted
To worship and adore the present Godhead.
Alas! I only am debarr'd from this;
The heav'nly benediction pierces not
My prison walls: its comfort is denied me
MEL . Yes! it can pierce them—put thy trust in Him
Who is almighty—in the hand of faith,

The wither'd staff can send forth verdant branches;
And he who from the rock call'd living water,
He can prepare an altar in this prison,
Can change—

[*Seizing the cup, which stands upon the table*

The earthly contents of this cup
Into a substance of celestial grace.

MARY. Melvil! O yes, I understand you, Melvil!
Here is no priest, no church, no sacrament;
But the Redeemer says, "When two or three
Are in my name assembled, I am with them."
What consecrates the priest? Say, what ordains him
To be the Lord's interpreter?—a heart
Devoid of guile, and a reproachless conduct.
Well, then, though unordain'd, be you my priest;
To you will I confide my last confession,
And take my absolution from your lips.

MEL. If then thy heart be with such zeal inflam'd,
I tell thee, that for thine especial comfort,
The Lord may work a miracle. Thou say'st
Here is no priest, no church, no sacrament—
Thou err'st—here *is* a priest—here *is* a God;
A god descends to thee in real presence.

[*At these words he uncovers his head, and shows a host in a golden vessel*

I am a priest—to hear thy last confession,
And to announce to thee the peace of God
Upon thy way to death. I have receiv'd
Upon my head the seven consecrations.
I bring thee, from his Holiness, this host,
Which, for thy use, himself has deign'd to bless.

MARY. Is then a heav'nly happiness prepar'd
To cheer me on the very verge of death?
As an immortal one on golden clouds
Descends, as once the angel from on high,
Deliver'd the Apostle from his fetters:—
He scorns all bars, he scorns the soldier's sword,
He steps undaunted through the bolted portals,
And fills the dungeon with his native glory,
Thus here the messenger of Heav'n appears,
When ev'ry earthly champion had deceiv'd me.
And you, my servant once, are now the servant

Of the Most High, and his immortal Word!
As before *me* your knees were wont to bend,
Before you humbled, now I kiss the dust.
[*She sinks before him on her knees.*

MELVIL (*making over her the sign of the cross*).
Hear, Mary Queen of Scotland:—in the name
Of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Hast thou examin'd carefully thy heart,
Swear'st thou, art thou prepar'd in thy confession
To speak the truth before the God of truth?

MARY. Before my God and thee, my heart lies open.

MEL. What calls thee to the presence of the Highest?

MARY. I humbly do acknowledge to have err'd
Most grievously, I tremble to approach,
Sullied with sin, the God of purity.

MEL. Declare the sin which weighs so heavily
Upon thy conscience, since thy last confession.

MARY. My heart was fill'd with thoughts of envious hate,
And vengeance took possession of my bosom.
I hope forgiveness of my sins from God,
Yet could I not forgive my enemy.

MEL. Repent'st thou of the sin? Art thou, in sooth,
Resolv'd to leave this world at peace with all?

MARY. As surely as I wish the joys of heav'n.

MEL. What other sin hath arm'd thy heart against thee?

MARY. Ah! not alone through hate; through lawless love
Have I still more abus'd the sov'reign good.
My heart was vainly turn'd towards the man,
Who left me in misfortune, who deceiv'd me.

MEL. Repent'st thou of the sin? And hast thou turn'd
Thy heart, from this idolatry, to God?

MARY. It was the hardest trial I have pass'd;
This last of earthly bonds is torn asunder

MEL. What other sin disturbs thy guilty conscience?

MARY. A bloody crime, indeed of ancient date,
And long ago confess'd; yet with new terrors
It now attacks me, black and grisly steps
Across my path, and shuts the gates of heav'n:
By my connivance fell the king, my husband—
I gave my hand and heart to a seducer—
By rigid penance I have made atonement;
Yet in my soul the worm is gnawing still.

MEL. . Has then thy heart no other accusation,
Which hath not been confess'd and wash'd away?
MARY. . All you have heard, with which my heart is charg'd.
MEL. . Think on the presence of Omniscience;
Think on the punishments, with which the church
Threatens imperfect, and reserv'd confession!
This is the sin to everlasting death,
For this is sinning 'gainst his Holy Spirit.
MARY. . So may eternal grace with victory
Crown my last contest, as I wittingly
Have nothing hid—
MELVIL. How? Wilt thou then conceal
The crime from God, for which thou art condemn'd
Thou tell'st me nothing of the share thou hadst
In Babington, and Parry's bloody treason:
Thou diest for this a temporal death; for this
Wilt thou too die the everlasting death?
MARY. I am prepar'd to meet eternity;
Within the narrow limits of an hour,
I shall appear before my judge's throne;
But, I repeat it, my confession's ended.
MEL. . Consider well—the heart is a deceiver.
Thou hast perhaps, with sly equivocation,
The *word* avoided, which would make thee guilty
Although thy will was party to the crime.
Remember, that no juggler's tricks can blind
The eye of fire which darts through ev'ry breast
MARY . 'Tis true, that I have call'd upon all princes
To free me from unworthy chains; yet 'tis
As true, that neither by intent or deed,
Have I attempted my oppressor's life.
MEL. . Your secretaries then have witness'd falsely.
MARY. . It is, as I have said;—what they have witness'd
The Lord will judge.
MELVIL. Thou mount'st then, satisfied
Of thy own innocence, the fatal scaffold?
MARY. . God suffers me in mercy to atone,
By undeserved death, my youth's transgressions.
MELVIL (*making over her the sign of the cross*).
Go, then, and expiate them all by death;
Sink a devoted victim on the altar,
Thus shall thy blood atone the blood thou 'st spilt

From female frailty were deriv'd thy faults,
Free from the weakness of mortality,
The spotless spirit seeks the blest abodes.
Now then, by the authority which God
Hath unto me committed, I absolve thee
From all thy sins—be as thy faith thy welfare!
[*He gives her the host.*
Receive the body which for thee was offer'd—
[*He takes the cup which stands upon the table, consecrates it with silent prayer, then presents it to her; she hesitates to take it, and makes signs to him to withdraw it.*
Receive the blood, which for thy sins was shed—
Receive it—'tis allow'd thee by the Pope,
To exercise in death the highest office
Of kings, the holy office of the priesthood.
[*She takes the cup*
And as thou now in this his earthly body
Hast held with God mysterious communion,
So may'st thou henceforth, in his realm of joy,
Where sin no more exists, nor tears of woe,
A fair transfigur'd spirit, join thyself
For ever with the Godhead, and for ever.
[*He sets down the cup; hearing a noise, he covers his head, and goes to the door; Mary remains in silent devotion, on her knees.*

MELVIL (*returning*). A painful conflict is in store for thee;
Feel'st thou within thee strength enough to smother
Each impulse of malignity and hate?

MARY. I fear not a relapse. I have to God
Devoted both my hatred, and my love.

MEL. . Well, then, prepare thee to receive my Lords
Of Leicester and of Burleigh. They are here.

## SCENE VIII.

*Enter* BURLEIGH, LEICESTER, *and* PAULET.

[LEICESTER *remains in the back-ground, without raising his eyes;* BURLEIGH, *who remarks his confusion, steps between him and the* QUEEN.

BUR. . I come, my Lady Stuart, to receive
Your last commands and wishes.

MARY. Thanks, my Lord

BUR. . It is the pleasure of my royal mistress,
That nothing reasonable be denied you.
MARY. . My will, my Lord, declares my last desires;
I've plac'd it in the hand of Sir Amias,
And humbly beg, that it may be fulfill'd.
PAUL. You may rely on this.
MARY I beg that all
My servants unmolested may return
To France, or Scotland, as their wishes lead
BUR. . It shall be as you wish.
MARY. And since my body
Is not to rest in consecrated ground,
I pray you suffer this my faithful servant
To bear my heart to France, to my relations—
Alas! 'twas ever there.
BURLEIGH. It shall be done
What wishes else?
MARY. Unto her Majesty
Of England bear a sister's salutation;
Tell her, that from the bottom of my heart
I pardon her my death: most humbly too
I crave her to forgive me for the passion
With which I spoke to her. May God preserve her
And bless her with a long and prosp'rous reign!
BUR. . Say, do you still adhere to your resolve,
And still refuse assistance from the Dean?
MARY. . My Lord, I've made my peace with God.
[*To* PAULET. Good Sir,
I have unwittingly caused you much sorrow,—
Bereft you of your age's only stay.
Oh, let me hope you do not hate my name.
PAULET (*giving her his hand*).
The Lord be with you! go your way in peace.

## SCENE IX.

HANNAH KENNEDY, *and the other women of the* QUEEN *crowd into the room, with marks of horror. The* SHERIFF *follows them, a white staff in his hand; behind are seen, through the open doors, men under arms.*

MARY. What ails thee, Hannah?—Yes—my hour is come—
The Sheriff comes to lead me to my fate,
And part we must—farewell!—

KENNEDY *and* CURL. We will not leave thee.
We will not part from thee.
MARY (*to* MELVIL). You, worthy Sir,
And my dear faithful Hannah, shall attend me,
In my last moments. I am sure, my Lord
Will not refuse my heart this consolation.
BUR. For this I have no warrant.
MARY. How, my Lord;
Can you deny me then this small petition?
Respect my sex; who shall attend me else,
And yield me the last service?—sure it never
Can be my sister's pleasure, that in me
My sex should be insulted; that these men
With their rude hands, should touch my royal person
BUR. 'Tis order'd that no woman shall ascend
The scaffold steps with you—their tears and moans—
MARY. She shall not weep, my Lord, she shall not moan;
I answer for my Hannah's resolution,
Be merciful; divide me not so soon
From my true foster-mother, from my friend.
She bore me on her arms into this life,
Let her then gently lead me to my death.
PAULET (*to* BURLEIGH).
Yield to her wishes.
BURLEIGH. Be it so.
MARY. I now
Have nothing in this world to wish for more.
[*She takes the crucifix, and kisses it.*
My God! My Comforter! My blest Redeemer!
As once thy arms were stretch'd upon the cross,
Let them be now extended to receive me!
[*She turns round to go, at the same moment her eyes fall upon* LEICESTER, *who, on her going, starts involuntarily and turns his eyes towards her: at this sight* MARY *trembles, her knees fail her, she is about to fall, when* LEICESTER *catches at her, and receives her in his arms; she regards him for some time earnestly, and in silence; he cannot support her looks; at length she speaks.*
You keep your word, my Lord of Leicester: for
You promised me your arm to lead me forth
From prison, and you lend it to me now.

At length the wish'd for day is come, and what
Was oft the object of my fondest dreams
Is now accomplish'd: and the Earl of Leicester,
The long expected, the long wish'd for friend,
Appears at length in Fotheringay Castle.
I see him standing in my prison; all
Is ready for the journey; all the gates
Stand open, and at length I cross the threshol
Conducted by his hand; and now I leave
These dismal walls behind me, and for ever.
All is fulfill'd, and you have sav'd your honour
[*He stands as if annihilated; she continues, with a gentle voice.*
Yes, Leicester; not for liberty alone
I wish'd to be indebted to your hands.
You should have made me bless that liberty.
Led by your hand, and happy in your love,
I hop'd once more to taste the joys of life.
Yes; now that I'm prepar'd from all the world
To part, and to become a happy spirit,
Whom earthly inclinations tempt no more,
Now, Leicester, I may venture to confess
Without a blush, the frailty I have conquer'd—
Farewell, my lord; and, if you can, be happy!
To woo two Queens has been your daring aim;
You have disdain'd a tender, loving heart;
Betray'd it, in the hope to win a proud one:
Kneel at the feet of Queen Elizabeth!
May your reward not prove your punishment.
Farewell; I now have nothing more on earth
[*She goes, preceded by the Sheriff, at her side* MELVIL *and her Nurse,* BURLEIGH *and* PAULET *follow, the others wailing, follow her with their eyes till she disappears; they then retire through the other two doors.*

## SCENE X.

LEICESTER (*remaining alone*).
Do I live still? Can I still bear to live?
Will not this roof fall down and bury me?
Yawns no abyss, to swallow in its gulph
The veriest wretch on earth? What have I lost?

Oh, what a pearl have I not cast away!
What bliss celestial madly dash'd aside!
She's gone, a spirit purged from earthly stain,
And the despair of hell remains for me!
Where is the purpose now with which I came,
To stifle my heart's voice in callous scorn?
To see her head descend upon the block
With unaverted and indifferent eyes?
How doth her presence wake my slumb'ring shame?
Must she in death surround me with Love's toils?
Lost, wretched man! No more it suits thee now
To melt away, in womanly compassion:
Love's golden bliss lies not upon thy path
Then arm thy breast in panoply of steel,
And henceforth be thy brows of adamant!
Wouldst thou not lose the guerdon of thy guilt,
Thou must uphold, complete it daringly!
Pity be dumb; mine eyes be petrified!
I'll see—I will be witness of her fall.

[*He advances with resolute steps towards the door, through which* MARY *passed; but stops suddenly half way.*

No! No! The terrors of all Hell possess me.
I cannot look upon the dreadful deed;
I cannot see her die!—Hark! What was that?
They are already there. Beneath my feet
The bloody business is preparing. Hark!
I hear their voices—Hence!—Away—Away—
From this abode of misery and death!

[*He attempts to escape by another door; finds it locked, and returns.*

How! Does some demon chain me to this spot?
To hear, what I would shudder to behold?
That voice—it is the Dean's, exhorting her;
She interrupts him. Hark—she prays aloud—
Her voice is firm—now all is still, quite still!
And sobs and women's moans are all I hear.
Now, they undress her—they remove the stool—
She kneels upon the cushion—lays her head—

[*Having spoken these last words, and paused awhile, he is seen with a convulsive motion suddenly to shrink, and faint away; a confused hum of*

*voices is heard at the same moment from below, and continues for some time.*

SCENE XI.

*The second Chamber in the Fourth Act*

ELIZABETH (*entering from a side door; her gait and action expressive of the most violent uneasiness*).

No message yet arrived! What! no one here!
Will evening never come! Stands the sun still
In its ethereal course? I can no more
Remain upon the rack of expectation!
Is it accomplish'd?—Is it not?—I shudder
At both events, and do not dare to ask.
My Lord of Leicester comes not,—Burleigh too,
Whom I appointed to fulfil the sentence.
If they have quitted London, then 'tis done,
The bolt has left its rest—it cuts the air—
It strikes;—has struck already:—were my realm
At stake, I could not now arrest its course.
Who's there?

SCENE XII.

*Enter a* PAGE.

ELIZABETH. Return'd alone? Where are the Lords?
PAGE. My Lord High Treasurer, and the Earl of Leicester—
ELIZ. Where are they?
PAGE. They are not in London.
ELIZ. No!
Where are they then?
PAGE. That no one could inform me;
Before the dawn, mysteriously, in haste,
They quitted London.
ELIZABETH (*exultingly*). I am Queen of England!
[*Walking up and down in the greatest agitation*
Go—call me—no, remain, boy! She is dead—
Now have I room upon the earth at last.
Why do I shake? Whence comes this agueish dread?
My fears are cover'd by the grave; who dares
To say I did it?—I have tears enough
In store to weep her fall.—Are you still here?
[*To the* PAGE
Command my secretary Davison

To come to me this instant. Let the Earl
Of Shrewsbury be summon'd. Here he comes.
[*Exit Page.*

## Scene XIII.

*Enter* Shrewsbury.

Eliz. Welcome, my noble Lord. What tidings—say
It cannot be a trifle which hath led
Your footsteps hither at so late an hour.

Shrew. My Liege, the doubts that hung upon my heart
And dutiful concern for your fair fame,
Directed me this morning to the Tower,
Where Mary's secretaries, Nau and Curl,
Are now confined as pris'ners, for I wish'd
Once more to put their evidence to proof.
On my arrival the lieutenant seem'd
Embarras'd and perplex'd; refus'd to show me
His pris'ners; but my threats obtain'd admittance.
God! what a sight was there! With frantic looks
With hair dishevell'd, on his pallet lay
The Scot, like one tormented by a fury.
The miserable man no sooner saw me,
Then at my feet he fell, and there, with screams,
Clasping my knees, and writhing like a worm,
Implored, conjured me to acquaint him with
His sov'reign's destiny, for vague reports
Had somehow reach'd the dungeons of the tow'r,
That she had been condemn'd to suffer death.
When I confirm'd these tidings, adding too,
That on his evidence she had been doom'd,—
He started wildly up,—caught by the throat
His fellow pris'ner; with the giant strength
Of madness tore him to the ground, and tried
To strangle him. No sooner had we sav'd
The wretch from his fierce grapple, than at once
He turn'd his rage against himself, and beat
His breast with savage fists; then curs'd himself
And his companions to the depths of hell!
His evidence was false; the fatal letters
To Babington, which he had sworn were true,
He now denounc'd as forgeries—for he
Had set down words the Queen had never spoken
The traitor Nau had led him to this treason.

Then ran he to the casement, threw it wide
With frantic force, and cried into the street
So loud, that all the people gather'd round.
I am the man, Queen Mary's secretary,
The traitor, who accus'd his mistress falsely;
I bore false witness, and am cursed for ever!

ELIZ. . You said yourself, that he had lost his wits;
A madman's words prove nothing.

SHREWSBURY. Yet this madness
Serves in itself to swell the proof. My Liege,
Let me conjure thee; be not over hasty;
Pri'thee, give order for a new inquiry!

ELIZ. . I will, my Lord, because it is your wish,
Not that I can believe my noble peers
Have in this case pronounced a hasty judgment.
To set your mind at rest, the inquiry shall
Be straight renew'd. Well, that 'tis not too late!—
Upon the honour of our royal name
No, not the shadow of a doubt shall rest.

SCENE XIV.

*Enter* DAVISON.

ELIZ. . The sentence, Sir, which I but late entrusted
Unto your keeping;—where is it?

DAVISON (*in the utmost astonishment*). The sentence!

ELIZABETH (*more urgent*).
Which yesterday I gave into your charge.

DAV. . Into my charge, my Liege!

ELIZABETH The people urged
And baited me to sign it. I perforce
Was driven to yield obedience to their will.
I did so; did so, on extreme constraint,
And in your hands deposited the paper.
To gain time was my purpose; you remember,
What then I told you. Now, the paper, Sir!

SHREW. Restore it, Sir, affairs have changed since then,
The inquiry must be set on foot anew.

DAV. . Anew! Eternal mercy!

ELIZABETH. Why this pause,
This hesitation? Where, Sir, is the paper?

DAV. . I am undone! Undone! My fate is sealed

ELIZABETH (*interrupting him violently*).
Let me not fancy, Sir—

DAVISON. O, I am lost!
I have it not.
ELIZABETH. How? What?
SHREWSBURY. O, God in heav'n!
DAV. . It is in Burleigh's hands—since yesterday.
ELIZ. . Wretch! Is it thus you have obeyed my orders?
Did I not lay my strict injunction on you
To keep it carefully?
DAVISON. No such injunction
Was laid on me, my Liege.
ELIZABETH. Give me the lie?
Opprobrious wretch! When did I order you
To give the paper into Burleigh's hands?
DAV. . Never expressly in so many words.—
ELIZ . And, paltering villain! dare you then presume
To construe, as you list, my words—and lay
Your bloody meaning on them? Wo betide you,
If evil come of this officious deed!
Your life shall answer the event to me.
Earl Shrewsbury, you see how my good name
Has been abused!
SHREWSBURY. I see! O, God in heav'n!
ELIZ. . What say you?
SHREWSBURY. If the Knight has dar'd to act
In this, upon his own authority,
Without the knowledge of your majesty,
He must be cited to the Court of Peers
To answer there for subjecting thy name
To the abhorrence of all after time

SCENE XV.

*Enter* BURLEIGH.

BURLEIGH (*bowing his knee before the Queen*).
Long life and glory to my royal mistress,
And may all enemies of her dominions
End like this Stuart.
[SHREWSBURY *hides his face.*—DAVISON *wrings his hands in despair.*
ELIZABETH. Speak, my Lord; did you
From me receive the warrant?
BURLEIGH. No, my Queen;
From Davison.

ELIZABETH. And did he in my name,
Deliver it?
BURLEIGH. No, that I cannot say.
ELIZ. And dar'd you then to execute the writ
Thus hastily, nor wait to know my pleasure?
Just was the sentence—we are free from blame
Before the world; yet it behoved thee not
To intercept our natural clemency.
For this, my Lord, I banish you my presence;
And as this forward will was *yours* alone
Bear *you* alone the curse of the misdeed! [*To* DAV
For, you, Sir; who have trait'rously o'erstepp'd
The bounds of your commission, and betray'd
A sacred pledge entrusted to your care,
A more severe tribunal is prepar'd:
Let him be straight conducted to the Tow'r,
And capital arraignments fil'd against him.
My honest Talbot, you alone have prov'd,
'Mongst all my counsellors, an upright man:
You shall henceforward be my guide—my friend.
SHREW. O! banish not the truest of your friends;
Nor cast those into prison, who for you
Have acted; who for you are silent now.
But suffer me, great Queen, to give the seal,
Which, these twelve years, I've borne unworthily.
Back to your royal hands, and take my leave.
ELIZABETH (*surprised*).
No, Shrewsbury; you surely would not now
Desert me? No; not now.
SHREWSBURY. Pardon, I am
Too old, and this right hand is grown too stiff
To set the seal upon your later deeds.
ELIZ. Will he forsake me, who has sav'd my life?
SHREW. 'Tis little I have done;—I could not save
Your nobler part. Live—govern happily!
Your rival's dead. Henceforth you've nothing more
To fear,—henceforth, to nothing pay regard. [*Exit*
ELIZABETH (*to the* EARL *of* KENT, *who enters*).
Send for the Earl of Leicester.
KENT. He desires
To be excused—he is embark'd for France.

*The Curtain drops*

# THE MAID OF ORLEANS.

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

CHARLES THE SEVENTH, *King of France.*
QUEEN ISABEL, *his Mother.*
AGNES SOREL.
PHILIP THE GOOD, *Duke of Burgundy.*
KARL DUNOIS, *Bastard of Orleans.*
LA HIRE, DUCHÂTEL, *French Officers.*
ARCHBISHOP OF RHEIMS.
CHATILLON, *a Burgundian Knight.*
RAOUL, *a Lotharingian Knight.*
TALBOT, *the English General.*
LIONEL, FASTOLFE, *English Officers.*
MONTGOMERY, *a Welshman.*
COUNCILLORS OF ORLEANS.
AN ENGLISH HERALD.
THIBAUT D'ARC, *a wealthy Country man.*
MARGOT, LOUISON, JOHANNA, *his daughters.*
ETIENNE, CLAUDE MARIE, RAIMOND, *their Suitors.*
BERTRAND, *another Countryman.*
*Apparition of a black Knight.*
CHARCOAL-BURNER AND HIS WIFE.
*Soldiers and People. Officers of the Crown. Bishops, Monks, Marshals, Magistrates, Courtiers, and other mute persons in the Coronation Procession.*

## PROLOGUE.

*A rural District. To the right, a Chapel with an Image of the Virgin; to the left, an ancient Oak.*

### SCENE I.

THIBAUT D'ARC. *His three Daughters. Three young Shepherds, their Suitors.*

THIB. Ay, my good neighbours! we at least to-day
Are Frenchmen still, free citizens and lords
Of the old soil, which our forefathers till'd.
Who knows whom we to-morrow must obey?
For England her triumphal banner waves
From every wall; the blooming fields of France
'rampled down beneath her chargers' hoofs;
hath yielded to her conquering arms,

And with the ancient crown of Dagobert
Adorns the scion of a foreign race.
Our king's descendant, disinherited,
Must steal in secret through his own domain;
While his first peer and nearest relative
Contends against him in the hostile ranks;
Ay, his unnatural mother leads them on.
Around us towns and peaceful hamlets burn.
Near and more near the devastating fire
Rolls toward these vales, which yet repose in peace
—Therefore, good neighbours, I have now resolved,
While God still grants us safety, to provide
For my three daughters; for 'midst war's alarms
Women require protection, and true love
Hath power to render lighter every load.
[*To the first Shepherd*
Come, Etienne! You seek my Margot's hand.
Fields lying side by side and loving hearts
Promise a happy union! [*To the second*
Claude! You're silent,
And my Louison looks upon the ground?
How, shall I separate two loving hearts
Because you have no wealth to offer me?
Who now has wealth? Our barns and homes afford
Spoil to the foe, and fuel to their fires.
In times like these, a husband's faithful breast
Affords the only shelter from the storm.

LOUIS My father!

CLAUDE MARIE. My Louison!

LOUISON (*embracing* JOHANNA). My dear sister!

THIB. . I give to each a yard, a stall and herd,
And also thirty acres; and as God
Gave me his blessing, so I give you mine!

MARGOT (*embracing* JOHANNA).
Gladden our father—follow our example!
Let this day see three unions ratified!

THIB. . Now go; make all things ready; for the morn
Shall see the wedding. Let our village friends
Be all assembled for the festival.
[*The two couple r*

## Scene II.

Thibaut, Raimond, Johanna.

THIB Thy sisters, Joan, will soon be happy brides;
I see them gladly, they rejoice my age;
But thou, my youngest, giv'st me grief and pain
RAIM What is the matter? Why upbraid thy child?
THIB Here is this noble youth, the flower and pride
Of all our village; he hath fix'd on thee
His fond affections, and for three long years
Has woo'd thee with respectful tenderness;
But thou dost thrust him back, with cold reserve
Nor is there one 'mong all our shepherd youths
Who e'er can win a gracious smile from thee.
—I see thee blooming in thy youthful prime;
Thy spring it is, the joyous time of hope;
Thy person, like a tender flower, hath now
Disclos'd its beauty, but I vainly wait
For love's sweet blossom genially to blow,
And ripen joyously to golden fruit!
Oh that must ever grieve me, and betrays
Some sad deficiency in nature's work!
The heart I like not, which, severe and cold,
Expands not in the genial years of youth.
RAIM. Forbear, good father! Cease to urge her thus!
A noble tender fruit of heavenly growth
Is my Johanna's love, and time alone
Bringeth the costly to maturity!
Still she delights to range among the hills,
And fears descending from the wild free heath,
To tarry 'neath the lowly roofs of men,
Where dwell the narrow cares of humble life.
From the deep vale, with silent wonder, oft
I mark her, when, upon a lofty hill
Surrounded by her flock, erect she stands,
With noble port, and bends her earnest gaze
Down on the small domains of earth. To me
She looketh then, as if from other times
She came, foreboding things of import high.

THIB. 'Tis that precisely which displeases me!
She shuns her sisters' gay companionship;
Seeks out the desert mountains, leaves her couch
Before the crowing of the morning cock,
And in the dreaded hour, when men are wont
Confidingly to seek their fellow-men,
She, like the solitary bird, creeps forth,
And in the fearful spirit-realm of night,
To yon crossway repairs, and there alone
Holds secret commune with the mountain wind.
Wherefore this place precisely doth she choose?
Why hither always doth she drive her flock?
For hours together I have seen her sit
In dreamy musing 'neath the Druid tree,
Which every happy creature shuns with awe.
For 'tis not holy there; an evil spirit
Hath since the fearful pagan days of old
Beneath its branches fix'd his dread abode.
The oldest of our villagers relate
Strange tales of horror of the Druid tree:
Mysterious voices of unearthly sound
From its unhallow'd shade oft meet the ear.
Myself, when in the gloomy twilight hour
My path once chanc'd to lead me near this tree,
Beheld a spectral figure sitting there,
Which slowly from its long and ample robe
Stretch'd forth its wither'd hand, and beckon'd me
But on I went with speed, nor look'd behind,
And to the care of God consign'd my soul.

RAIMOND (*pointing to the image of the Virgin*).
Yon holy image of the Virgin blest,
Whose presence heavenly peace diffuseth round,
Not Satan's work, leadeth thy daughter here.

THIB. No! not in vain hath it in fearful dreams
And apparitions strange reveal'd itself.
For three successive nights I have beheld
Johanna sitting on the throne at Rheims,
A sparkling diadem of seven stars
Upon her brow, the sceptre in her hand,
From which three lilies sprung, and I, her sire

With her two sisters, and the noble peers
The earls, archbishops, and the King himself,
Bow'd down before her. In my humble home,
How could this splendour enter my poor brain?
Oh, 'tis the prelude to some fearful fall!
This warning dream, in pictur'd show, reveals
The vain and sinful longing of her heart.
She looks with shame upon her lowly birth.
Because with richer beauty God hath grac'd
Her form, and dower'd her with wondrous gifts
Above the other maidens of this vale,
She in her heart indulges sinful pride,
And pride it is, through which the angels fell,
By which the fiend of Hell seduces man.

RAIM. Who cherishes a purer, humbler mind
Than doth thy pious daughter? Does she not
With cheerful spirit work her sisters' will?
She is more highly gifted far than they,
Yet, like a servant maiden, it is she
Who silently performs the humblest tasks.
Beneath her guiding hands prosperity
Atttendeth still thy harvests and thy flocks;
And around all she does there ceaseless flows
A blessing, rare and unaccountable.

THIB. Ay truly! Unaccountable indeed!
Sad horror at this blessing seizes me!
—But now no more; henceforth I will be silent.
Shall I accuse my own beloved child?
I can do nought but warn and pray for her.
Yet warn I must.—O shun the Druid tree!
Stay not alone, and in the midnight hour
Break not the ground for roots, no drinks prepare,
No characters inscribe upon the sand!
'Tis easy to unlock the realm of spirits;
Listening each sound, beneath a film of earth
They lie in wait, ready to rush aloft.
Stay not alone, for in the wilderness
The prince of darkness tempted e'en our Lord

SCENE III.

THIBAUT, RAIMOND, JOHANNA.

BERTRAND *enters, a helmet in his hand.*

RAIM Hush! here is Bertrand coming back from town,
What bears he in his hand?

BERTRAND. You look at me
With wondering gaze; no doubt you are surprised
To see this martial helm!

THIBAUT. We are indeed!
Come, tell us how you came by it? Why bring
This fearful omen to our peaceful vale?

[JOHANNA, *who has remained indifferent during the two previous scenes, becomes attentive, and steps nearer.*

BERT. I scarce can tell you how I came by it.
I had procur'd some tools at Vaucouleurs;
A crowd was gather'd in the market-place,
For fugitives were just arriv'd in haste
From Orleans, bringing most disastrous news.
In tumult all the town together flock'd,
And as I forc'd a passage through the crowds,
A brown Bohemian woman, with this helm,
Approach'd me, eyed me narrowly, and said:
"Fellow, you seek a helm; I know it well.
Take this one! For a trifle it is yours."
"Go with it to the soldiers," I replied,
"I am a husbandman, and want no helm."
She would not cease, however, and went on:
"None knoweth if he may not want a helm.
A roof of metal for the head just now
Is of more value than a house of stone."
Thus she pursued me closely through the streets,
Still offering the helm, which I refused.
I mark'd it well, and saw that it was bright,
And fair and worthy of a knightly head;
And when in doubt I weigh'd it in my hand,
The strangeness of the incident revolving,
The woman disappear'd, for suddenly
The rushing crowd had carried her away.

And I was left, the helmet in my hand.

JOHANNA (*attempting eagerly to seize it*).

Give me the helmet!

BERTRAND. Why, what boots it you?

It is not suited to a maiden's head.

JOHANNA (*seizing it from him*).

Mine is the helmet—it belongs to me!

THIB. . What whim is this?

RAIMOND. Nay, let her have her way!

This warlike ornament becomes her well,
For in her bosom beats a manly heart.
Remember how she once subdued the wolf,
The savage monster which destroyed our herds,
And fill'd the neighb'ring shepherds with dismay.
She all alone—the lion-hearted maid—
Fought with the wolf, and from him snatch'd the lamb,
Which he was bearing in his bloody jaws.
How brave soe'er the head this helm adorn'd,
It cannot grace a worthier one than hers!

THIBAUT (*to* BERTRAND).

Relate what new disasters have occurred.
What tidings brought the fugitives?

BERTRAND. May God

Have pity on our land, and save the King!
In two great battles we have lost the day;
Our foes are station'd in the heart of France,
Far as the river Loire our lands are theirs—
Now their whole force they have combined, and lay
Close siege to Orleans.

THIBAUT. God protect the King!

BERT. . Artillery is brought from every side,
And as the dusky squadrons of the bees
Swarm round the hive upon a summer day,
As clouds of locusts from the sultry air
Descend and shroud the country round for miles,
So doth the cloud of war, o'er Orleans' fields,
Pour forth its many-nationed multitudes,
Whose varied speech, in wild confusion blent,
With strange and hollow murmurs fills the air.
For Burgundy, the mighty potentate,

Conducts his motley host; the Hennegarians,
The men of Liege and of Luxemburg,
The people of Namur, and those who dwell
In fair Brabant; the wealthy men of Ghent,
Who boast their velvets, and their costly silks;
The Zealanders, whose cleanly towns appear
Emerging from the ocean; Hollanders
Who milk the lowing herds; men from Utrecht,
And even from West Friesland's distant realm,
Who look towards the ice-pole—all combine,
Beneath the banner of the powerful duke,
Together to accomplish Orleans' fall.

THIB. . Oh the unblest, the lamentable strife,
Which turns the arms of France against itself!

BERT. . E'en she, the Mother-Queen, proud Isabel—
Bavaria's haughty princess—may be seen,
Array'd in armour, riding through the camp;
With poisonous words of irony she fires
The hostile troops to fury 'gainst her son,
Whom she hath clasp'd to her maternal breast

THIB. . A curse upon her, and may God prepare
For her a death like haughty Jezebel's!

BERT. . The fearful Sal'sbury conducts the siege,
The town-destroyer; with him Lionel,
The brother of the lion; Talbot, too,
Who, with his murd'rous weapon, moweth down
The people in the battle: they have sworn,
With ruthless insolence, to doom to shame
The hapless maidens, and to sacrifice
All who the sword have wielded, with the sword.
Four lofty watch-towers, to o'ertop the town,
They have uprear'd; Earl Sal'sbury from on high
Casteth abroad his cruel, murd'rous glance,
And marks the rapid wanderers in the streets.
Thousands of cannon balls, of pond'rous weight,
Are hurl'd into the city. Churches lie
In ruin'd heaps, and Nôtre Dame's royal tower
Begins at length to bow its lofty head.
They also have form'd powder-vaults below,
And thus, above a subterranean hell,
The timid city every hour expects,

Midst crashing thunder, to break forth in flames.

[JOHANNA *listens with close attention, and places the helmet on her head.*

THIB. . But where were then our heroes? Where the swords
Of Saintrailles, and La Hire, and brave Dunois,
Of France the bulwark, that the haughty foe
With such impetuous force thus onward rushed?
Where is the King? Can he supinely see
His kingdom's peril, and his cities' fall?

BERT. The King at Chinon holds his court; he lacks
Soldiers to keep the field. Of what avail
The leader's courage, and the hero's arm,
When pallid fear doth paralyze the host?
A sudden panic, as if sent from God,
Unnerves the courage of the bravest men
In vain the summons of the King resounds
As when the howling of the wolf is heard,
The sheep in terror gather side by side,
So Frenchmen, careless of their ancient fame,
Seek only now the shelter of the towns.
One knight alone, I have been told, has brought
A feeble company, and joins the King
With sixteen banners.

JOHANNA (*quickly*). What's the hero's name?

BERT. . 'Tis Baudricour. But much I fear the knight
Will not be able to elude the foe,
Who track him closely with two numerous hosts.

JOHAN. . Where halts the knight? Pray tell me, if you know

BERT. . About a one day's march from Vaucouleurs.

THIBAUT (*to* JOHANNA).
Why, what is that to thee? Thou dost inquire
Concerning matters which become thee not.

BERT. . The foe being now so strong, and from the King
No safety to be hoped, at Vaucouleurs
They have with unanimity resolved
To yield them to the Duke of Burgundy.
Thus we avoid a foreign yoke, and still
Continue by our ancient royal line;
Ay, to the ancient crown we may fall back
Should France and Burgundy be reconcil'd.

JOHANNA (*as if inspired*).
Speak not of treaty! Speak not of surrender!
The Saviour comes, he arms him for the fight
The fortunes of the foe before the walls
Of Orleans shall be wreck'd! His hour is come,
He now is ready for the reaper's hand,
And with her sickle will the maid appear,
And mow to earth the harvest of his pride.
She from the heavens will tear his glory down,
Which he had hung aloft, among the stars;
Despair not! Fly not! for ere yonder corn
Assumes its golden hue, or ere the moon
Displays her perfect orb, no English horse
Shall drink the rolling waters of the Loire.
BERT. Alas! no miracle will happen now!
JOHAN. Yes, there shall yet be one—a snow-white dove
Shall fly, and with the eagle's boldness, tear
The birds of prey, which rend her Fatherland.
She shall o'erthrow this haughty Burgundy,
Betrayer of the kingdom; Talbot, too,
The hundred-handed, heaven-defying scourge;
This Sal'sbury, who violates our fanes,
And all these island robbers shall she drive
Before her like a flock of timid lambs.
The Lord will be with her, the God of battle;
A weak and trembling creature he will choose,
And through a tender maid proclaim his power,
For he is the Almighty!
THIBAUT. What strange power
Hath seized the maiden?
RAIMOND. Doubtless 'tis the helm
Which doth inspire her with such martial thoughts
Look at your daughter. Mark her flashing eye,
Her glowing cheek, which kindles as with fire!
JOHAN This realm shall fall! This ancient land of fame,
The fairest that, in his majestic course,
Th' eternal sun surveys—this paradise,
Which, as the apple of his eye, God loves—
Endure the fetters of a foreign yoke?
--Here were the heathen scatter'd, and the cross

And holy image first were planted here;
Here rest Saint Louis' ashes, and from hence
The troops went forth, who set Jerusalem free.

BERTRAND (*in astonishment*).

Hark how she speaks! Why, whence can she obtain
This glorious revelation?—Father Arc!
A wond'rous daughter God hath given you!

JOHAN. We shall no longer serve a native prince!
The King, who never dies, shall pass away—
The guardian of the sacred plough, who fills
The earth with plenty, who protects our herds,
Who frees the bondmen from captivity,
Who gathers all his cities round his throne—
Who aids the helpless, and appals the base,
Who envies no one, for he reigns supreme;
Who is a mortal, yet an angel too,
Dispensing mercy on the hostile earth.
For the King's throne, which glitters o'er with gold,
Affords a shelter for the destitute;—
Power and compassion meet together there,
The guilty tremble, but the just draw near,
And with the guardian lion fearless sport!
The stranger king, who cometh from afar,
Whose fathers' sacred ashes do not lie
Interr'd among us; can he love our land?
Who was not young among our youth, whose heart
Respondeth not to our familiar words,
Can he be as a father to our sons?

THIB. God save the King and France! We're peaceful folk,
Who neither wield the sword, nor rein the steed.
—Let us await the King whom victory crowns;
The fate of battle is the voice of God.
He is our Lord who crowns himself at Rheims,
And on his head receives the holy oil.
—Come, now to work! come! and let every one
Think only of the duty of the hour!
Let the earth's great ones for the earth contend,
Untroubled we may view the desolation,
For stedfast stand the acres which we till.
The flames consume our villages, our corn
Is trampled 'neath the tread of warlike steeds;

With the new spring new harvests re-appear,
And our light huts are quickly rear'd again!
[*They all retire, except the Maiden*

SCENE IV

JOHANNA (*alone*).

Farewell, ye mountains, ye beloved glades,
Ye lone and peaceful valleys, fare ye well!
Through you Johanna never more may stray!
For aye Johanna bids you now farewell.
Ye meads which I have water'd, and ye trees
Which I have planted, still in beauty bloom!
Farewell ye grottos, and ye crystal springs!
Sweet echo, vocal spirit of the vale,
Who sang'st responsive to my simple strain,
Johanna goes, and ne'er returns again.

Ye scenes where all my tranquil joys I knew,
For ever now I leave you far behind!
Poor foldless lambs, no shepherd now have you!
O'er the wide heath stray henceforth unconfin'd!
For I to danger's field, of crimson hue,
Am summon'd hence, another flock to find.
Such is to me the Spirit's high behest;
No earthly vain ambition fires my breast.

For who in glory did on Horeb's height
Descend to Moses in the bush of flame,
And bade him go and stand in Pharaoh's sight—
Who once to Israel's pious shepherd came,
And sent him forth, his champion in the fight,—
Who aye hath loved the lowly shepherd train,—
He, from these leafy boughs, thus spake to me,
" Go forth! Thou shalt on earth my witness be.

" Thou in rude armour must thy limbs invest,
A plate of steel upon thy bosom wear;
Vain earthly love may never stir thy breast,
Nor passion's sinful glow be kindled there.
Ne'er with the bride-wreath shall thy locks be dress'd
Nor on thy bosom bloom an infant fair;

But war's triumphant glory shall be thine;
Thy martial fame all women's shall outshine.

" For when in fight the stoutest hearts despair,
When direful ruin threatens France, forlorn,
Then thou aloft my oriflamme shalt bear,
And swiftly as the reaper mows the corn,
Thou shalt lay low the haughty conqueror;
His fortune's wheel thou rapidly shalt turn,
To Gaul's heroic sons deliv'rance bring,
Relieve beleaguer'd Rheims, and crown thy king!"

The heavenly Spirit promised me a sign;
He sends the helmet, it hath come from him.
Its iron filleth me with strength divine,
I feel the courage of the cherubim;
As with the rushing of a mighty wind
It drives me forth to join the battle's din;
The clanging trumpets sound, the chargers rear,
And the loud war-cry thunders in mine ear.

[*She goes out*

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## ACT I.

### SCENE I.

*The royal Residence at Chinon.*

DUNOIS *and* DU CHATEL.

DUNOIS No longer I'll endure it. I renounce
This recreant Monarch who forsakes himself.
My valiant heart doth bleed, and I could rain
Hot tear-drops from mine eyes, that robber-swords
Partition thus the royal realm of France;
That cities, ancient as the monarchy,
Deliver to the foe the rusty keys,
While here in idle and inglorious ease
We lose the precious season of redemption.
—Tidings of Orleans' peril reach mine ear,
Hither I sped from distant Normandy,
Thinking, arrayed in panoply of war,
To find the Monarch with his marshall'd hosts;

And find him—here! begirt with troubadours,
And juggling knaves, engaged in solving riddles,
And planning festivals in Sorel's honour,
As brooded o'er the land profoundest peace!
—The Constable hath gone, he will not brook
Longer the spectacle of shame.—I too
Depart, and leave him to his evil fate.

DUCH.. Here comes the King.

## SCENE II.

KING CHARLES. *The same.*

CHAS. . The Constable hath sent us back his sword
And doth renounce our service. Now, by Heaven!
He thus hath rid us of a churlish man,
Who insolently sought to lord it o'er us.

DUNOIS. A man is precious in such perilous times;
I would not deal thus lightly with his loss.

CHAS. . Thou speakest thus from love of opposition;
While he was here, thou never wert his friend

DUNOIS. He was a tiresome, proud, vexatious fool,
Who never could resolve.—For once, however,
He hath resolved. Betimes he goeth hence,
Where honour can no longer be achieved.

CHAS. . Thou'rt in a pleasant humour; undisturb'd
I'll leave thee to enjoy it.—Hark, Du Chatel!
Ambassadors are here from old king René,
Of tuneful song the master, far renowned.
—Let them as honour'd guests be entertain'd,
And unto each present a chain of gold.
[*To the bastard*
Why smilest thou Dunois?

DUNOIS. That from thy mouth
Thou shakest golden chains.

DUCHATEL. Alas! my King!
No gold existeth in thy treasury.

CHAS. . Then gold must be procured.—It must not be
That bards unhonour'd from our court depart.
'Tis they who make our barren sceptre bloom,
'Tis they who wreath around our fruitless crown
Life's joyous branch, of never-fading green.

Reigning, they justly rank themselves as kings,
Of gentle wishes they erect their throne,
Their harmless realm existeth not in space;
Hence should the bard accompany the king,
Life's higher sphere the heritage of both!

DUCH. My royal Liege! I sought to spare thine ear
So long as aid and counsel could be found;
Now dire necessity doth loose my tongue.
—Nought hast thou now in presents to bestow,
Thou hast not wherewithal to live to-morrow!
The spring-tide of thy fortune is run out,
And lowest ebb is in thy treasury!
The soldiers, disappointed of their pay,
With sullen murmurs, threaten to retire.
My counsel faileth, not with royal splendour
But meagerly, to furnish out thy household

CHAS. . My royal customs pledge, and borrow gold
From the Lombardians.

DUCHATEL. Sire, thy revenues,
Thy royal customs, are for three years pledg'd.

DUNOIS. And pledge meanwhile and kingdom both are lost

CHAS. . Still many rich and beauteous lands are ours.

DUNOIS. So long as God and Talbot's sword permit!
When Orleans falleth into English hands
Then with King René thou may'st tend thy sheep!

CHAS. . Still at this King thou lov'st to point thy jest;
Yet 'tis this lackland Monarch, who to-day
Hath with a princely crown invested me.

DUNOIS. Not, in the name of heaven, with that of Naples,
Which is for sale, I hear, since he kept sheep.

CHAS. It is a sportive festival, a jest,
Wherein he giveth to his fancy play,
To found a world all innocent and pure
In this barbaric, rude reality.
Yet noble—ay, right royal is his aim!
He will again restore the golden age,
When gentle manners reigned, when faithful lo
The heroic hearts of valiant knights inspired,
And noble women, whose accomplished taste
Diffuseth grace around, in judgment sat.
The old man dwelleth in those bygone times,

And in our workday world would realize
The dreams of ancient bards, who picture life
'Mid bowers celestial, thron'd on golden clouds.—
He hath established hence a court of love,
Where valiant knights may dwell, and homage yield
To noble women, who are there enthroned,
And where pure love and true may find a home.
Me he hath chosen as the prince of Love.

DUNOIS. I am not such a base degenerate churl,
As Love's dominion rudely to assail.
I am her son, from her derive my name,
And in her kingdom lies my heritage.
The prince of Orleans was my sire, and while
No woman's heart was proof against his love,
No hostile fortress could withstand his shock!
Wilt thou, indeed, with honour name thyself
The prince of Love—be bravest of the brave!
As I have read in those old chronicles,
Love aye went coupled with heroic deeds,
And valiant heroes, not inglorious shepherds.
So legends tell us, graced king Arthur's board
The man whose valour is not beauty's shield,
Is all unworthy of her golden prize.
Here the arena!—combat for the crown,
Thy royal heritage!—with knightly sword
Thy lady's honour and thy realm defend—
And hast thou with hot valour snatch'd the crown
From streams of hostile blood,—then is the time,
And it would well become thee as a prince,
Love's myrtle chaplet round thy brows to wreathe.

CHARLES (*to a* PAGE, *who enters*).
What is the matter?

PAGE. Senators from Orleans
Entreat an audience, Sire.

CHARLES. Conduct them hither!
[PAGE *retires*
Doubtless they succour need; what can I do,
Myself all-succourless!

## SCENE III.

*The same. Three* SENATORS.

CHAS. Welcome, my trusty citizens of Orleans!
What tidings bring ye from my faithful town?
Doth she continue with her wonted zeal
Still bravely to withstand the leaguering foe?

SENAT. . Ah, Sire! the city's peril is extreme;
And giant ruin, waxing hour by hour,
Still onward strides. The bulwarks are destroyed
The foe, at each assault, advantage gains;
Bare of defenders are the city walls,
For with rash valour forth our soldiers rush,
While few, alas! return to view their homes,
And famine's scourge impendeth o'er the town.
In this extremity, the noble Count
Of Rochepierre, commander of the town,
Hath made a compact with the enemy,
According to old custom, to yield up,
On the twelfth day, the city to the foe,
Unless, meanwhile, before the town appear
A host of magnitude to raise the siege.

[DUNOIS *manifests the strongest indignation*

CHAS. . The interval is brief.

SENATOR We hither come,
Attended by a hostile retinue,
To implore thee, Sire, to pity thy poor town,
And to send succour ere the appointed day,
When, if still unrelieved, she must surrender.

DUNOIS. And could Saintrailles consent to give his voice
To such a shameful compact?

SENATOR. Never, Sir!
Long as the hero liv'd, none dared to breathe
A single word of treaty, or surrender.

DUNOIS. He then is dead?

SENATOR. The noble hero fell,
His Monarch's cause defending, on our walls.

CHAS. . What! Saintrailles dead! Oh, in that single man
A host is founder'd!

[*A Knight enters and speaks apart with* DUNOIS, *who starts with surprise.*

DUNOIS. That too!
CHARLES. Well! What is it?
DUNOIS. Count Douglas sendeth here. The Scottish troops
Revolt, and threaten to retire at once,
Unless their full arrears are paid to-day.
CHAS. . Du Chatel!
DU CHATEL (*shrugs his shoulders*).
Sire! I know not what to counsel.
CHAS. . Pledge, promise all, even unto half my realm.—
CHAT. . 'Tis vain! They have been fed with hope too often!
CHAS. . They are the finest troops of all my host!
They must not now, not now abandon me!
SENATOR (*throwing himself at the* KING'S *feet*).
Oh, King, assist us! Think of our distress!
CHARLES (*in despair*).
How! Can I summon armies from the earth?
Or grow a cornfield on my open palm?
Rend me in pieces!—Pluck my bleeding heart
Forth from my breast, and coin it 'stead of gold!
I've blood for you, but neither coin, nor troops.
[*He sees* SOREL *approach, and hastens towards her with outstretched arms.*

## SCENE IV.

*The same.* AGNES SOREL, *a casket in her hand*

CHAS . My Agnes! Oh, my love! my dearest life!
Thou comest here to snatch me from despair!
Refuge I take within thy loving arms;
Possessing thee, I feel that nought is lost.
SOREL. My King, beloved!
[*Looking around with an anxious, inquiring gaze*
Dunois! Say, is it true,
Du Chatel?
DU CHATEL. 'Tis alas!
SOREL. So great the need?
No treasure left? The soldiers will disband?
CHAT. . Alas! it is too true!
SOREL (*giving him the casket*). Here—here is gold,
Here too are jewels! Melt my silver down!
Sell, pledge my castles—on my fair domains

In Provence, treasure raise—turn all to gold,
Appease the troops! No time is to be lost!
[*She urges him to depart.*

CHAS. . Well now, Dunois! Du Chatel! Do ye still
Account me poor, when I possess the crown
Of womankind?—She's nobly born as I;
The royal blood of Valois not more pure;
The most exalted throne she would adorn—
Yet she rejects it with disdain, and claims
No other title than to be my love.
No gift more costly will she e'er receive
Than early flower in winter, or rare fruit!
No sacrifice, on my part, she permits,
Yet sacrificeth all she hath to me!
With generous spirit she doth venture all
Her wealth and fortune in my sinking bark.

DUNOIS. Ay, she is mad indeed, my King, as thou;
She throws her all into a burning house,
And draweth water in the leaky vessel
Of the Danaïdes. Thee she will not save,
And in thy ruin but involve herself.—

SOREL. . Believe him not! Full many a time he hath
Perill'd his life for thee, and now forsooth,
Chafeth, because I risk my worthless gold!
How? Have I freely sacrificed to thee
What is esteemed far more than gold and pearls,
And shall I now hold back the gifts of fortune?
Oh, come! Let my example challenge thee
To noble self-denial! Let 's at once
Cast off the needless ornaments of life!
Thy courtiers metamorphose into soldiers;
Thy gold transmute to iron; all thou hast,
With resolute daring, venture for thy crown!
Peril and want we will participate!
Let us bestride the war-horse, and expose
Our tender person to the fiery glow
Of the hot sun, take for our canopy
The clouds above, and make the stones our pillow.
The rudest warrior, when he sees his King
Bear hardship and privation like the meanest,
Will patiently endure his own hard lot!

CHARLES (*laughing*).
Ay! now is realized an ancient word
Of prophecy, once uttered by a nun
Of Clairmont, in prophetic mood, who said,
That through a woman's aid I o'er my foes
Should triumph, and achieve my father's crown.
Far off I sought her in the English camp;
I strove to reconcile a mother's heart;
Here stands the heroine—my guide to Rheims!
My Agnes! I shall triumph through thy love!
SOREL. Thou'lt triumph through the valiant swords of friends
CHAS. . And from my foes' dissensions much I hope—
For sure intelligence hath reach'd mine ear,
That 'twixt these English lords and Burgundy
Things do not stand precisely as they did;—
Hence to the duke I have despatch'd La Hire,
To try if he can lead my angry vassal
Back to his ancient loyalty and faith:—
Each moment now I look for his return.
DU CHATEL (*at the window*).
A knight e'en now dismounteth in the court.
CHAS. . A welcome messenger! We soon shall learn
Whether we're doomed to conquer or to yield.

## SCENE V.

*The same.* LA HIRE.

CHARLES (*meeting him*).
Hope bringest thou, or not? Be brief, La Hire!
Out with thy tidings! What must we expect?
HIRE. . Expect nought, Sire, save from thine own good sword.
CHAS . The haughty duke will not be reconciled!
Speak! How did he receive my embassy?
HIRE. . His first and unconditional demand,
Ere he consent to listen to thine errand,
Is that Du Chatel be deliver'd up,
Whom he doth name the murderer of his Sire.
CHAS . This base condition we reject with scorn!
HIRE. . Then be the league dissolved ere it commence!
CHAS. . Hast thou thereon, as I commanded thee,

Challenged the duke to meet me in fair fight
On Montereau's bridge, whereon his father fell?

HIRE. Before him on the ground I flung thy glove,
And said:—"Thou wouldst forget thy majesty,
And like a knight do battle for thy realm."
He scornfully rejoined—"He needed not
To fight for that which he possess'd already.
But if thou wert so eager for the fray,
Before the walls of Orleans thou wouldst find him,
Whither he purposed going on the morrow;"
Thereon he laughing turn'd his back upon me.

CHAS. Say, did not justice raise her sacred voice,
Within the precincts of my Parliament?

HIRE. . The rage of party, Sire, hath silenc'd her.
An edict of the Parliament declares
Thee, and thy race, excluded from the throne

DUNOIS. These upstart burghers' haughty insolence!

CHAS. . Hast thou attempted with my mother aught?

HIRE. . With her?

CHARLES. Ay! How did she demean herself?

LA HIRE (*after a few moments' reflection*).
I chanced to step within St. Denis' walls
Precisely at the royal coronation.
The crowds were dress'd as for a festival;
Triumphal arches rose in every street
Through which the English monarch was to pass.
The way was strewed with flowers, and with huzzas
As France some brilliant conquest had achieved,
The people thronged around the royal car.

SOREL. They could huzza—huzza, while trampling thus
Upon a gracious sovereign's loving heart!

HIRE. . I saw young Harry Lancaster—the boy—
On good St. Lewis' regal chair enthroned;
On either side his haughty uncles stood,
Bedford and Gloucester, and before him kneeled,
To render homage for his lands, Duke Philip.

CHAS. . O peer dishonour'd! O unworthy cousin!

HIRE. . The child was timid, and his footing lost
As up the steps he mounted towards the throne.
An evil omen! murmured forth the crowd,
And scornful laughter burst on every side.

Then forward stepped Queen Isabel--thy mother,
And—but it angers me to utter it!

CHARLES. Say on.

HIRE. . Within her arms she clasped the boy,
And herself placed him on thy father's throne.

CHAS. . Oh, mother! mother!

LA HIRE. E'en the murderous bands
Of the Burgundians, at this spectacle,
Evinced some tokens of indignant shame.
The Queen perceived it, and addressed the crowds,
Exclaiming with loud voice: "Be grate l, French men,
That I engraft upon a sickly stock
A healthy scion, and redeem you from
The misbegotten son of a mad Sire!"

[*The* KING *hides his face; Agnes hastens towards him and clasps him in her arms; all the by-standers express aversion and horror.*

DUNOIS. She-wolf of France! Rage-breathing Megara!

CHARLES (*after a pause to the senators*).
Yourselves have heard the posture of affairs.
Delay no longer, back return to Orleans,
And bear this message to my faithful town:
I do absolve my subjects from their oath,
Their own best interests let them now consult,
And yield them to the Duke of Burgundy;
Yclept the Good, he needs must prove humane.

DUNOIS. What say'st thou, Sire? Thou wilt abandon Orleans!

SENATOR (*kneels down*).
My King! Abandon not thy faithful town!
Consign her not to England's harsh control
She is a precious jewel in thy crown,
And none hath more inviolate faith maintain'd
Towards the kings, thy royal ancestors.

DUNOIS. Have we been routed? Is it lawful, Sire,
To leave the English masters of the field,
Without a single stroke to save the town?
And thinkest thou, with careless breath, forsooth,
Ere blood hath flowed, rashly to give away
The fairest city from the heart of France?

CHAS. . Blood hath been poured forth freely, and in vain!

The hand of Heaven is visibly against me;
In every battle is my host o'erthrown,
I am rejected of my parliament,
My capital, my people, hail my foe,
Those of my blood,—my nearest relatives,—
Forsake me and betray—and my own mother
Doth nurture at her breast the hostile brood.
—Beyond the Loire we will retire, and yield
To the o'ermastering hand of destiny
Which sideth with the English.

SOREL. God forbid
That we in weak despair should quit this realm!
This utterance came not from thy heart, my King
Thy noble heart, which hath been sorely riven
By the fell deed of thy unnatural mother!
Thou'lt be thyself again, right valiantly
Thou'lt battle with thine adverse destiny,
Which doth oppose thee with relentless ire.

CHARLES (*lost in gloomy thought*).
Is it not true? A dark and ominous doom
Impendeth o'er the heaven-abandon'd house
Of Valois—there preside the avenging powers,
To whom a mother's crimes unbarr'd the way.
For thirty years my sire in madness rav'd;
Already have three elder brothers been
Mow'd down by death; 'tis the decree of Heaven,
The house of the Sixth Charles is doom'd to fall

SOREL. In thee 'twill rise with renovated life!
Oh, in thyself have faith!—Believe me, King,
Not vainly hath a gracious destiny
Redeem'd thee from the ruin of thy house,
And by thy brethren's death exalted thee,
The youngest born, to an unlook'd for throne.
Heaven in thy gentle spirit hath prepared
The leech to remedy the thousand ills
By party rage inflicted on the land.
The flames of civil discord thou wilt quench,
And my heart tells me, thou'lt establish peace,
And found anew the monarchy of France.

CHAS. Not I! The rude and storm-vexed times require
A pilot formed by nature to command.
A peaceful nation I could render happy,

A wild rebellious people not subdue.
I never with the sword could open hearts
Against me closed in hatred's cold reserve.

SOREL. The people's eye is dimm'd, an error blinds them,
But this delusion will not long endure;
The day is not far distant, when the love,
Deep rooted in the bosom of the French,
Towards their native monarch will revive,
Together with the ancient jealousy,
Which forms a barrier 'twixt the hostile nations.
The haughty foe precipitates his doom.
Hence, with rash haste abandon not the field,
With dauntless front contest each foot of ground,
As thine own heart defend the town of Orleans!
Let every boat be sunk beneath the wave,
Each bridge be burned, sooner than carry thee
Across the Loire, the bound'ry of thy realm,
The Stygian flood, o'er which there's no return.

CHAS. What could be done I have done. I have offer'd,
In single fight, to combat for my crown.—
I was refused. In vain my people bleed,
In vain my towns are levell'd with the dust.
Shall I, like that unnatural mother, see
My child in pieces severed with the sword?
No; I forego my claim, that it may live.

DUNOIS. How, Sire! Is this fit language for a king?
Is a crown thus renounced? Thy meanest subject
For his opinion's sake, his hate and love,
Sets property and life upon a cast;
When civil war hangs out her bloody flag
Each private end is drowned in party zeal.
The husbandman forsakes his plough, the wife
Neglects her distaff; children, and old men,
Don the rude garb of war; the citizen
Consigns his town to the devouring flames,
The peasant burns the produce of his fields;
And all to injure or advantage thee,
And to achieve the purpose of his heart.
Men show no mercy, and they wish for none,
When they at honour's call maintain the fight,
Or for their idols or their gods contend.
A truce to such effeminate pity, then,

Which is not suited to a monarch's breast.
—Thou didst not heedlessly provoke the war:
As it commenced, so let it spend its fury.
It is the law of destiny that nations
Should for their monarchs immolate themselves,
We Frenchmen recognise this sacred law,
Nor would annul it. Base, indeed, the nation,
That for its honour ventures not its all.

CHARLES (*to the* SENATORS).
You've heard my last resolve—expect no other.
May God protect you! I can do no more.

DUNOIS. As thou dost turn thy back upon thy realm,
So may the God of battle aye avert
His visage from thee. Thou forsak'st thyself,
So I forsake thee. Not the power combined
Of England and rebellious Burgundy,
Thy own mean spirit hurls thee from the throne.
Born heroes ever were the kings of France;
Thou wert a craven even from thy birth.
[*To the* SENATORS
The King abandons you. But I will throw
Myself into your town—my father's town—
And 'neath its ruins find a soldier's grave.
[*He is about to depart.*—AGNES SOREL *detains him*

SOL (*to the* KING).
Oh let him not depart in anger from thee!
Harsh words his lips have utter'd, but his heart
Is true as gold. 'Tis he, himself, my King,
Who loves thee, and hath often bled for thee.
Dunois! confess, the heat of noble wrath
Made thee forget thyself—and oh, do thou
Forgive a faithful friend's o'erhasty speech!
Come! let me quickly reconcile your hearts,
Ere anger bursteth forth in quenchless flame!
[DUNOIS *looks fixedly at the* KING, *and appears to await an answer.*

CHAS. . Our way lies over the Loire. Du Châtel!
See all our equipage embarked.

DUNOIS (*quickly to* SOREL). Farewell!
[*He turns quickly round, and goes out.*—*The* SENATORS *follow.*

SOREL (*wringing her hands in despair*).
O, if he goes, we are forsaken quite!
—Follow, La Hire! O seek to soften him!
[LA HIRE *goes out*

SCENE VI.

CHARLES, SOREL, DU CHATEL.

CHAS. Is, then, the sceptre such a peerless treasure?
Is it so hard to loose it from our grasp?
Believe me, 'tis more galling to endure
The domineering rule of these proud vassals.
To be dependent on their will and pleasure
Is, to a noble heart, more bitter far
Than to submit to fate.
[*To* DU CHATEL, *who still lingers*
Du Châtel, go,
And do what I commanded!
DU CHATEL (*throws himself at the* KING'S *feet*).
Oh, my King!
CHAS. No more! Thou'st heard my absolute resolve!
CHATEL. Sire! with the Duke of Burgundy make peace!
'Tis the sole outlet from destruction left!
CHAS. Thou giv'st this counsel, and thy blood alone
Can ratify this peace?
DU CHATEL. Here is my head.
I oft have risked it for thee in the fight,
And with a joyful spirit I, for thee,
Would lay it down upon the block of death.
Conciliate the Duke! Deliver me
To the full measure of his wrath, and let
My flowing blood appease the ancient hate!
CHARLES (*looks at him for some time in silence, and with deep emotion*).
Can it be true? Am I, then, sunk so low,
That even friends, who read my inmost heart,
Point out, for my escape, the path of shame?
Yes, now I recognise my abject fall.
My honour is no more confided in.
CHATEL. Reflect—
CHARLES. Be silent, and incense me not!
Had I ten realms, on which to turn my back,

With my friend's life I would not purchase them
—Do what I have commanded. Hence, and see
My equipage embarked.

DU CHATEL. 'Twill speedily
Be done.

[*He stands up and retires.*—AGNES SOREL *weeps passionately.*

## SCENE VII.

*The Royal Palace at Chinon.*

CHARLES, AGNES SOREL.

CHARLES (*seizing the hand of* AGNES).
My Agnes, be not sorrowful!
Beyond the Loire we still shall find a France;
We are departing to a happier land,
Where laughs a milder, an unclouded sky,
And gales more genial blow; we there shall meet
More gentle manners; song abideth there,
And love and life in richer beauty bloom

SOREL. Oh, must I contemplate this day of wo!
The King must roam in banishment! the son
Depart, an exile from his father's house,
And turn his back upon his childhood's home!
O pleasant, happy land, that we forsake,
Ne'er shall we tread thee joyously again!

## SCENE VIII.

LA HIRE *returns*, CHARLES, SOREL.

SOREL. You come alone? You do not bring him back?
[*Observing him more closely.*
La Hire! What news? What does that look announce?
Some new calamity?

LA HIRE. Calamity
Hath spent itself; sunshine is now return'd

SOREL What is it? I implore you.

LA HIRE (*to the* KING). Summon back
The delegates from Orleans!

CHARLES. Why? What is it?

HIRE. Summon them back! Thy fortune is reversed.
A battle has been fought, and thou hast conquer'd

SOREL. Conquer'd! O heavenly music of that word!
CHAS. . La Hire! A fabulous report deceives thee:
Conquer'd!—In conquest I believe no more
HIRE. Still greater wonders thou wilt soon believe.
—Here cometh the Archbishop. To thine arms
He leadeth back Dunois.—
SOREL. O beauteous flower
Of victory, which doth the heavenly fruits
Of peace and reconcilement bear at once!

## SCENE IX.

*The same*, ARCHBISHOP OF RHEIMS, DUNOIS, DU CHATEL, *with* RAOUL, *a Knight in armour.*

ARCHBISHOP (*leading* DUNOIS *to the* KING, *and joining their hands*).
Princes, embrace! Let rage and discord cease,
Since Heaven itself hath for our cause declared.
[DUNOIS *embraces the* KING
CHAS. Relieve my wonder and perplexity.
What may this solemn earnestness portend?
Whence this unlook'd for change of fortune?
ARCHBISHOP (*leads the Knight forward, and presents him to the* KING). Speak!
RAOUL. We had assembled sixteen regiments
Of Lotharingian troops, to join your host;
And Baudricourt, a Knight of Vaucouleurs,
Was our commander. Having gain'd the heights
By Vermanton, we wound our downward way
Into the valley water'd by the Yonne;
There, in the plain before us, lay the foe,
And when we turn'd, arms glitter'd in our rear.
We saw ourselves surrounded by two hosts,
And could not hope for conquest or for flight
Then sank the bravest heart, and in despair
We all prepared to lay our weapons down.
The leaders with each other anxiously
Sought counsel and found none,—when to our eyes
A spectacle of wonder show'd itself!
For suddenly from forth the thickets' depths

A maiden, on her head a polish'd helm,
Like a war-goddess, issued; terrible
Yet lovely was her aspect, and her hair
In dusky ringlets round her shoulders fell.
A heavenly radiance shone around the height;
When she upraised her voice and thus address'd us:
" Why be dismay'd, brave Frenchmen? On the foe!
Were they more numerous than the ocean sands,
God and the holy Maiden lead you on!"
Then quickly from the standard-bearer's hand
She snatch'd the banner, and before our troop
With valiant bearing strode the wond'rous maid
Silent with awe, scarce knowing what we did,
The banner and the Maiden we pursue,
And fired with ardour, rush upon the foe,
Who, much amazed, stand motionless and view
The miracle with fix'd and wondering gaze.—
Then, as if seized by terror sent from God,
They suddenly betake themselves to flight,
And casting arms and armour to the ground,
Disperse in wild disorder o'er the field.
No leader's call, no signal now avails;
Senseless from terror, without looking back,
Horses and men plunge headlong in the stream,
Where they without resistance are despatch'd.
It was a slaughter rather than a fight!
Two thousand of the foe bestrew'd the field,
Not reckoning numbers swallow'd by the flood,
While of our company not one was slain.

CHAS. 'Tis strange, by Heaven! most wonderful and strange!

SOREL A maiden work'd this miracle, you say?
Whence did she come? Who is she?

RAOUL. Who she is
She will reveal to no one but the King!
She calls herself a seer and prophetess
Ordain'd by God, and promises to raise
The siege of Orleans ere the moon shall change.
The people credit her, and thirst for war
The host she follows—she'll be here anon.

*[The ringing of bells is heard, together with the clang of arms.*

Hark to the din! The pealing of the bells!
'Tis she! The people greet God's messenger.

CHARLES (*to* DU CHATEL.).
Conduct her hither.— [*To the* ARCHBISHOP
What should I believe?
A maiden brings me conquest even now,
When nought can save me but a hand divine!
This is not in the common course of things.
And dare I here believe a miracle?

MANY VOICES (*behind the scene*).
Hail to the Maiden!—the deliverer!

CHAS. She comes! Dunois, now occupy my place!
We will make trial of this wond'rous maid.
Is she indeed inspired and sent by God,
She will be able to discern the King.
[DUNOIS *seats himself; the* KING *stands at his right hand,* AGNES SOREL *near him; the* ARCHBISHOP *and the others opposite; so that the intermediate space remains vacant*

## SCENE X.

*The same.* JOHANNA, *accompanied by the Councillors and many Knights, who occupy the background of the scene; she advances with noble bearing, and slowly surveys the company*

DUNOIS (*after a long and solemn pause*).
Art thou the wond'rous Maiden—

JOHANNA (*interrupts him, regarding him with dignity*).
Bastard of Orleans, thou wilt tempt thy God!
This place abandon, which becomes thee not!
To this more mighty one the Maid is sent.
[*With a firm step she approaches the* KING, *bows one knee before him, and, rising immediately, steps back. All present express their astonishment,* DUNOIS *forsakes his seat, which is occupied by the* KING.

CHAS. Maiden, thou ne'er hast seen my face before.
Whence hast thou then this knowledge?

JOHANNA Thee I saw

When none beside, save God in heaven, beheld thee
[*She approaches the* KING *and speaks mysteriously*
Bethink thee, Dauphin, in the bygone night!
When all around lay buried in deep sleep,
Thou from thy couch didst rise and offer up
An earnest prayer to God. Let these retire
And I will name the subject of thy prayer.

CHAS. . What I to Heaven confided need not be
From men conceal'd. Disclose to me my prayer,
And I shall doubt no more that God inspires thee

JOHAN. Three prayers thou offer'dst, Dauphin; listen now
Whether I name them to thee! Thou didst pray
That if there were appended to this crown
Unjust possession, or if heavy guilt,
Not yet atoned for, from thy father's times,
Occasion'd this most lamentable war,
God would accept thee as a sacrifice,
Have mercy on thy people, and pour forth
Upon thy head the chalice of his wrath.

CHARLES (*steps back with awe*).
Who art thou, mighty one? Whence comest thou?
[*All express their astonishment.*

JOHAN. To God thou offeredst this second prayer:
That if it were His will and high decree
To take away the sceptre from thy race,
And from thee to withdraw whate'er thy sires,
The monarchs of this kingdom, once possess'd,
He in his mercy would preserve to thee
Three priceless treasures—a contented heart,
Thy friend's affection, and thine Agnes' love.
[*The* KING *conceals his face: the spectators express their astonishment.—After a pause,*
Thy third petition shall I name to thee?

CHAS. . Enough—I credit thee! This doth surpass
Mere human knowledge: thou art sent by God!

ARCHB. Who art thou, wonderful and holy maid?
What favour'd region bore thee? What blest pair,
Belov'd of Heaven, may claim thee as their child?

JOHAN. Most reverend father, I am nam'd Johanna,
I am a shepherd's lowly daughter, born
In Dom Remi, a village of my King,

Included in the diocese of Toul,
And from a child I kept my father's sheep.
—And much and frequently I heard them tell
Of the strange islanders, who o'er the sea
Had come to make us slaves, and on us force
A foreign lord, who loveth not the people;
How the great city, Paris, they had seized,
And had usurp'd dominion o'er the realm.
Then earnestly God's Mother I implor'd
To save us from the shame of foreign chains,
And to preserve to us our lawful King.
Not distant from my native village stands
An ancient image of the Virgin blest,
To which the pious pilgrims oft repair'd;
Hard by a holy oak, of blessed power,
Standeth, far-fam'd through wonders manifold.
Beneath the oak's broad shade I lov'd to sit,
Tending my flock—my heart still drew me there
And if by chance among the desert hills
A lambkin strayed, 'twas shown me in a dream,
When in the shadow of this oak I slept.
—And once, when through the night beneath this tree
In pious adoration I had sat,
Resisting sleep, the Holy One appear'd,
Bearing a sword and banner, otherwise
Clad like a shepherdess, and thus she spake:—
"'Tis I; arise, Johanna! leave thy flock.
The Lord appoints thee to another task!
Receive this banner! Gird thee with this sword!
Therewith exterminate my people's foes;
Conduct to Rheims thy royal master's son,
And crown him with the kingly diadem!"
And I made answer: "How may I presume
To undertake such deeds, a tender maid,
Unpractis'd in the dreadful art of war!"
And she replied: "A maiden pure and chaste
Achieves whate'er on earth is glorious,
If she to earthly love ne'er yields her heart.
Look upon me! a virgin, like thyself;
I to the Christ, the Lord divine, gave birth,
And am myself divine!"—Mine eyelids then

She touch'd, and when I upward turn'd my gaze;
Heaven's wide expanse was fill'd with angel-boys,
Who bore white lilies in their hands, while tones
Of sweetest music floated through the air.
—And thus on three successive nights appear'd
The Holy One, and cried—" Arise, Johanna!
The Lord appoints thee to another task!"
And when the third night she reveal'd herself,
Wrathful she seem'd, and chiding spake these words
" Obedience, woman's duty here on earth;
Severe endurance is her heavy doom;
She must be purified through discipline;
Who serveth here, is glorified above!"
While thus she spake, she let her shepherd garb
Fall from her, and as Queen of Heaven stood forth,
Enshrined in radiant light, while golden clouds
Upbore her slowly to the realms of bliss.

[*All are moved;* AGNES SOREL *weeping, hides her face on the bosom of the* KING.

ARCHBISHOP (*after a long pause*).
Before divine credentials such as these
Each doubt of earthly prudence must subside
Her deeds attest the truth of what she speaks,
For God alone such wonders can achieve.

DUNOIS. I credit not her wonders, but her eyes,
Which beam with innocence and purity.

CHAS. . Am I, a sinner, worthy of such favour?
Infallible, All-searching eye, thou seest
Mine inmost heart, my deep humility!

JOHAN. Humility shines brightly in the skies;
Thou art abased, hence God exalteth thee.

CHAS. . Shall I indeed withstand mine enemies?

JOHAN. France I will lay submissive at thy feet!

CHAS. . And Orleans, say'st thou, will not be surrender'd?

JOHAN. The Loire shall sooner roll its waters back.

CHAS. . Shall I in triumph enter into Rheims?

JOHAN. I through ten thousand foes will lead thee there.

[*The knights make a noise with their lances and shields, and evince signs of courage.*

DUNOIS. Appoint the Maiden to command the host!

We follow blindly wheresoe'er she leads.
The holy one's prophetic eye shall guide,
And this brave sword from danger shall protect her!

HIRE. A universe in arms we will not fear,
If she, the mighty one, precede our troops.
The God of battle walketh by her side;
Let her conduct us on to victory!
[*The Knights clang their arms and press forward*

CHAS. Yes, holy Maiden, do thou lead mine host;
My chiefs and warriors shall submit to thee.
This sword of matchless temper, proved in war,
Sent back in anger by the Constable,
Hath found a hand more worthy. Prophetess,
Do thou receive it, and henceforward be—

JOHAN. No, noble Dauphin! conquest to my Liege
Is not accorded through this instrument
Of earthly might. I know another sword
Wherewith I am to conquer, which to thee,
I, as the Spirit taught, will indicate;
Let it be hither brought.

CHARLES. Name it, Johanna.

JOHAN. Send to the ancient town of Fierbois;
There in Saint Catherine's churchyard is a vault
Where lie in heaps the spoils of bygone war.
Among them is the sword, which I must use.
It, by three golden lilies may be known,
Upon the blade impress'd. Let it be brought,
For thou, my Liege, shalt conquer through this sword.

CHAS. Perform what she commands.

JOHANNA. And a white banner,
Edg'd with a purple border, let me bear.
Upon this banner let the Queen of Heaven
Be pictur'd, with the beauteous Jesus child,
Floating in glory o'er this earthly ball.
For so the Holy Mother show'd it me.

CHAS. So be it as thou sayest.

JOHANNA (*to the* ARCHBISHOP). Reverend Bishop:
Lay on my head thy consecrated hands!
Pronounce a blessing, Father, on thy child!
[*She kneels down*

ARCH. Not blessings to receive, but to dispense
Art thou appointed.—Go, with power divine!
But we are sinners all and most unworthy.
[*She rises: a* PAGE *enters.*
PAGE. A herald from the English generals.
JOHAN. Let him appear, for he is sent by God!
[*The* KING *motions to the* PAGE, *who retires*

## SCENE XI.

*The* HERALD. *The same.*

CHAS. . Thy tidings, Herald? What thy message? Speak!
HER. . Who is it, who for Charles of Valois,
The Count of Pointhieu, in this presence speaks?
DUNOIS. Unworthy Herald! base, insulting knave!
Dost thou presume the Monarch of the French
Thus in his own dominions to deny?
Thou art protected by thine office, else—
HER. One king alone is recognised by France,
And he resideth in the English camp.
CHAS. . Peace, peace, good cousin! Speak thy message, Herald!
HER. . My noble general laments the blood
Which hath already flow'd, and still must flow.
Hence, in the scabbard holding back the sword,
Before by storm the town of Orleans falls,
He offers thee an amicable treaty.
CHAS. . Proceed!
JOHANNA (*stepping forward*).
Permit me, Dauphin, in thy stead,
To parley with this herald.
CHARLES. Do so, Maid!
Determine thou, for peace, or bloody war.
JOHANNA (*to the* HERALD).
Who sendeth thee? Who speaketh through thy mouth?
HER. The Earl of Salisbury; the British chief.
JOHAN. Herald, 'tis false! The earl speaks not through thee.
Only the living speak, the dead are silent.
HER. . The earl is well, and full of lusty strength;
He lives to bring down ruin on your heads.
JOHAN. When thou didst quit the British camp, he lived.
This morn, while gazing from Le Tournelle's tower,
A ball from Orleans struck him to the ground

—Smil'st thou, that I discern what is remote?
Not to my words give credence; but believe
The witness of thine eyes! his funeral train
Thou shalt encounter as thou goest hence!
Now, Herald, speak, and do thine errand here.

HER. If what is hidden thou canst thus reveal,
Thou know'st mine errand ere I tell it thee.

JOHAN. It boots me not to know it. But do thou
Give ear unto my words! This message bear
In answer to the lords who sent thee here.
—Monarch of England, and ye haughty dukes,
Bedford and Gloucester, regents of this realm!
To Heaven's high King ye are accountable
For all the blood that hath been shed! Restore
The keys of all the cities ta'en by force,
In opposition to God's holy law!
The Maiden cometh from the King of Heaven
And offers you or peace, or bloody war.
Choose ye! for this I say, that ye may know it:
To you this beauteous realm is not assign'd
By Mary's Son;—but God hath given it
To Charles, my lord and Dauphin, who ere long
Will enter Paris with a monarch's pomp,
Attended by the great ones of his realm.
—Now, Herald, go, and speedily depart,
For ere thou canst attain the British camp
And do thine errand, is the Maiden there,
To plant the sign of victory at Orleans.

[*She retires. In the midst of a general movement, the curtain falls.*

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## ACT II.

*Landscape, bounded by Rocks.*

### SCENE I.

TALBOT *and* LIONEL, *English Generals*, PHILIP, DUKE OF BURGUNDY, FASTOLFE, *and* CHATILLON, *with Soldiers and Banners.*

TALBOT. Here let us make a halt, beneath these rocks,
And pitch our camp, in case our scatter'd troops,
Dispers'd in panic fear, again should rally.

Choose trusty sentinels, and guard the heights!
'Tis true the darkness shields us from pursuit,
And sure I am, unless the foe have wings,
We need not fear surprisal.—Still 'tis well
To practise caution, for we have to do
With a bold foe, and have sustain'd defeat.
[FASTOLFE *goes out with the soldiers*

LIONEL. Defeat! My general, do not speak that word.
It stings me to the quick to think the French
To-day have seen the backs of Englishmen.
—O, Orleans! Orleans! Grave of England's glory!
Our honour lies upon thy fatal plains
Defeat most ignominious and burlesque!
Who will in future years believe the tale!
The victors of Poictiers and Agincourt,
Cressy's bold heroes, routed by a woman?

BURG. That must console us. Not by mortal power,
But by the devil, have we been o'erthrown!

TALBOT. The devil of our own stupidity!
—How, Burgundy? Do princes quake and fear
Before the phantom which appals the vulgar?
Credulity is but a sorry cloak
For cowardice—Your people first took flight.

BURG. None stood their ground. The flight was general

TALBOT. 'Tis false! Your wing fled first. You wildly broke
Into our camp, exclaiming: "Hell is loose,
The devil combats on the side of France!"
And thus you brought confusion 'mong our troops

LIONEL. You can't deny it. Your wing yielded first.

BURG. Because the brunt of battle there commenced.

TALBOT. The Maiden knew the weakness of our camp;
She rightly judged where fear was to be found.

BURG. How? Shall the blame of our disaster rest
With Burgundy?

LIONEL. By Heav'n! were we alone,
We English, never had we Orleans lost!

BURG. No, truly!—for ye ne'er had Orleans seen!
Who opened you a way into this realm,
And reached you forth a kind and friendly hand,
When you descended on this hostile coast?

Who was it crowned your Henry at Paris,
And unto him subdued the people's hearts?
Had this Burgundian arm not guided you
Into this realm, by Heaven ye ne'er had seen
The smoke ascending from a single hearth!

LIONEL. Were conquests with big words effected, Duke,
You, doubtless, would have conquered France alone

BURG The loss of Orleans angers you, and now
You vent your gall on me, your friend and ally.
What lost us Orleans, but your avarice?
The city was prepared to yield to me,
Your envy was the sole impediment.

TALBOT. We did not undertake the siege for you.

BURG. . How would it stand with you, if I withdrew
With all my host?

LIONEL. We should not be worse off,
Than when, at Agincourt, we prov'd a match
For you, and all the banded power of France.

BURG. . Yet much ye stood in need of our alliance,
The regent purchased it at heavy cost.

TALBOT. Most dearly, with the forfeit of our honour,
At Orleans, have we paid for it to-day.

BURG . Urge me no further, Lords. Ye may repent it!
Did I forsake the banners of my King,
Draw down upon my head the traitor's name,
To be insulted thus by foreigners?
Why am I here to combat against France?
If I must needs endure ingratitude,
Let it come rather from my native King!

TALBOT. You're in communication with the Dauphin,
We know it well, but we shall soon find means
To guard ourselves 'gainst treason.

BURGUNDY. Death and Hell!
Am I encounter'd thus?—Chatillon, hark!
Let all my troops prepare to quit the camp
We will retire into our own domain.

[CHATILLON *goes out*

LIONEL. God speed you there! Never did Britain's fame
More brightly shine, than when she stood alone,
Confiding solely in her own good sword

Let each one fight his battle for himself,
For 'tis eternal truth, that English blood
Cannot, with honour, blend with blood of France.

## SCENE II.

*The same* QUEEN ISABEL, *attended by a Page.*

ISABEL. What must I hear? This fatal strife forbear!
What brain-bewildering planet o'er your minds
Sheds dire perplexity? When unity
Alone can save you, will you part in hate,
And, warring 'mong yourselves, prepare your doom?
—I do entreat you, noble Duke, recall
Your hasty order. You, renowned Talbot,
Seek to appease an irritated friend!
Come, Lionel, aid me to reconcile
These haughty spirits, and establish peace.

LIONEL. Not I, Madame. It is all one to me.
'Tis my belief, when things are misallied,
The sooner they part company the better.

ISABEL. How? Do the arts of hell, which on the field
Wrought such disastrous ruin, even here
Bewilder and befool us? Who began
This fatal quarrel? Speak!—Lord General!
Your own advantage did you so forget,
As to offend your worthy friend and ally?
What could you do without his powerful arm?
'Twas he who placed your Monarch on the throne,
He holds him there, and he can hurl him thence:
His army strengthens you—still more his name.
Were England all her citizens to pour
Upon our coasts, she never o'er this realm
Would gain dominion, did she stand alone;
No! France can only be subdued by France!

TALBOT. A faithful friend we honour as we ought;
Discretion warns us to beware the false.

BURG. The liar's brazen front beseemeth him
Who would absolve himself from gratitude.

ISABEL. How, noble Duke? Could you so far renounce
Your princely honour, and your sense of shame,
As clasp the hand of him who slew your sire?
Are you so mad to entertain the thought

Of cordial reconcilement with the Dauphin,
Whom you, yourself, have hurl'd to ruin's brink?
His overthrow you have well nigh achieved,
And madly now would you renounce your work?
Here stand your allies. Your salvation lies
In an indissoluble bond with England.

BURG. Far is my thought from treaty with the Dauphin;
But the contempt and insolent demeanour
Of haughty England I will not endure.

ISABEL. Come, noble Duke! Excuse a hasty word.
Heavy the grief which bows the general down,
And well you know, misfortune makes unjust.
Come! come! embrace; let me this fatal breach
Repair at once, ere it becomes eternal.

TALBOT. What think you, Burgundy? A noble heart,
By reason vanquish'd, doth confess its fault.
A wise and prudent word the Queen hath spoken
Come, let my hand, with friendly pressure, heal
The wound inflicted by my angry tongue.

BURG. Discreet the counsel offered by the Queen!
My just wrath yieldeth to necessity.

ISABEL. 'Tis well! Now, with a brotherly embrace,
Confirm and seal the new-established bond;
And may the winds disperse what hath been spoken
[BURGUNDY *and* TALBOT *embrace*

LIONEL (*contemplating the group aside*).
Hail to an union by the Furies planned!

ISABEL. Fate hath proved adverse, we have lost a battle
But do not, therefore, let your courage sink.
The Dauphin, in despair of heavenly aid,
Doth make alliance with the powers of Hell;
Vainly his soul he forfeits to the Devil,
For Hell itself cannot deliver him.
A conquering maiden leads the hostile force:
Yours, I, myself, will lead; to you I'll stand
In place of maiden or of prophetess

LIONEL. Madame, return to Paris! We desire
To war with trusty weapons, not with women.

TALBOT. Go! go! Since your arrival in the camp,
Fortune hath fled our banners, and our course
Hath still been retrograde

BURGUNDY. Depart at once!
Your presence here doth scandalize the host.
ISABEL (*looks from one to the other with astonishment*).
This, Burgundy, from you? Do you take part
Against me with these thankless English lords?
BURG. . Go! go! The thought of combating for you
Unnerves the courage of the bravest men.
ISABEL. I scarce among you have establish'd peace,
And you already form a league against me!
TALBOT. Go, in God's name. When you have left the camp
No devil will again appal our troops,
ISABEL. Say am I not your true confederate?
Are we not banded in a common cause?
TALBOT. Thank God! your cause of quarrel is not ours.
We combat in an honourable strife.
BURG. . A father's bloody murder I avenge;
Stern filial duty consecrates my arms.
TALBOT. Confess at once! Your conduct towards the Dauphin
Is an offence alike to God and man.
ISABEL. Curses blast him and his posterity!
The shameless son who sins against his mother!
BURG. . Ay! to avenge a husband and a father!
ISABEL. To judge his mother's conduct he presumed!
LIONEL. That was, indeed, irreverent in a son!
ISABEL. And me, forsooth, he banish'd from the realm!
TALBOT. Urged to the measure by the public voice.
ISABEL. A curse light on him if I e'er forgive him!
Rather than see him on his father's throne—
TALBOT. His mother's honour you would sacrifice!
ISABEL. Your feeble natures cannot comprehend
The vengeance of an outrag'd mother's heart.
Who pleasures me, I love; who wrongs, I hate.
If he who wrongs me chance to be my son,
All the more worthy is he of my hate.
The life I gave, I will again take back
From him who doth, with ruthless violence,
The bosom rend which bore and nourish'd him.
Ye, who do thus make war upon the Dauphin,
What rightful cause have ye to plunder him?
What crime hath he committed against you?
What insult are you call'd on to avenge?

Ambition, paltry envy, goad you on;
I have a right to hate him—he's my son.

TALBOT. He feels his mother in her dire revenge!

ISABEL. Mean hypocrites! I hate you and despise.
Together with the world, you cheat yourselves!
With robber-hands you English seek to clutch
This realm of France, where you have no just right,
Nor equitable claim, to so much earth
As could be cover'd by your charger's hoof.
—This Duke, too, whom the people style The Good,
Doth to a foreign lord, his country's foe,
For gold betray the birthland of his sires.
And yet is justice ever on your tongue.
—Hypocrisy I scorn. Such as I am,
So let the world behold me!

BURGUNDY. It is true!
Your reputation you have well maintain'd.

ISABEL. I've passions and warm blood, and as a queen
Came to this realm to live, and not to seem.
Should I have lingered out a joyless life
Because the curse of adverse destiny
To a mad consort join'd my blooming youth?
More than my life I prize my liberty.
And who assails me here—But why should I
Stoop to dispute with you about my rights?
Your sluggish blood flows slowly in your veins!
Strangers to pleasure, ye know only rage!
This duke too—who, throughout his whole career,
Hath waver'd to and fro, 'twixt good and ill—
Can neither hate nor love with his whole heart.
—I go to Melun. Let this gentleman,
[*Pointing to* LIONEL.
Who doth my fancy please, attend me there,
To cheer my solitude, and you may work
Your own good pleasure! I'll inquire no more
Concerning the Burgundians or the English.
[*She beckons to her* PAGE, *and is about to retire*

LIONEL. Rely upon us, we will send to Melun
The fairest youths whom we in battle take.
[*Coming back.*

ISABEL. Skilful your arm to wield the sword of death,
The French alone can round the polish'd phrase.
[*She goes out*

## SCENE III.

TALBOT, BURGUNDY, LIONEL

TALBOT. Heavens! What a woman!
LIONEL. Now, brave generals,
Your counsel! Shall we prosecute our flight,
Or turn, and with a bold and sudden stroke
Wipe out the foul dishonour of to-day?
BURG. We are too weak, our soldiers are dispersed,
The recent terror still unnerves the host.
TALBOT Blind terror, sudden impulse of a moment,
Alone occasioned our disastrous rout.
This phantom of the terror-stricken brain,
More closely view'd, will vanish into air.
My counsel, therefore, is, at break of day,
To lead the army back, across the stream,
To meet the enemy
BURGUNDY Consider well—
LIONEL. Your pardon! Here is nothing to consider
What we have lost we must at once retrieve,
Or look to be eternally disgraced.
TALBOT. It is resolved. To-morrow morn we fight,
This dread-inspiring phantom to destroy,
Which thus doth blind and terrify the host
Let us in fight encounter this she-devil.
If she oppose her person to our sword,
Trust me, she never will molest us more;
If she avoid our stroke—and be assured
She will not stand the hazard of a battle—
Then is the dire enchantment at an end!
LIONEL. So be it! And to me, my general, leave
This easy, bloodless combat, for I hope
Alive to take this ghost, and in my arms,
Before the Bastard's eyes—her paramour—
To bear her over to the English camp,
To be the sport and mockery of the host.
BURG. Make not too sure.
TALBOT. If she encounter me,

I shall not give her such a soft embrace.
Come now, exhausted nature to restore
Through gentle sleep. At daybreak we set forth.
[*They go out*

## SCENE IV.

JOHANNA, *with her banner, in a helmet and breast-plate, otherwise attired as a woman.* DUNOIS, LA HIRE, *Knights, and Soldiers, appear above upon the rocky path, pass silently over, and appear immediately after on the scene.*

JOHANNA (*to the Knights, who surround her, while the procession continues above*).
The wall is scaled, and we are in the camp!
Now fling aside the mantle of still night,
Which hitherto hath veil'd your silent march,
And your dread presence to the foe proclaim
By your loud battle cry—God and the Maiden!

ALL (*exclaim aloud, amidst the loud clang of arms*).
God and the Maiden! [*Drums and trumpets.*

SENTINELS (*behind the scene*). The foe! The foe! The foe!

JOHAN. Ho! torches here! Hurl fire into the tents!
Let the devouring flames augment the horror,
While threatening death doth compass them around!
[*Soldiers hasten on, she is about to follow.*

DUNOIS (*holding her back*).
Thy part thou hast accomplish'd now, Johanna!
Into the camp thou hast conducted us.
The foe thou hast deliver'd in our hands.
Now from the rush of war remain apart!
The bloody consummation leave to us.

HIRE. Point out the path of conquest to the host;
Before us, in pure hand, the banner bear,
But wield the fatal weapon not thyself;
Tempt not the treacherous god of battle, for
He rageth blindly, and he spareth not.

JOHAN. Who dares impede my progress? Who presume
The Spirit to control, which guideth me?
Still must the arrow wing its destin'd flight!
Where danger is, there must Johanna be;
Nor now, nor here, am I foredoom'd to fail;

Our Monarch's royal brow I first must see
Invested with the round of sovereignty.
No hostile power can rob me of my life,
Till I've accomplish'd the commands of God.
[*She goes out.*

HIRE. Come, let us follow after her, Dunois,
And let our valiant bosoms be her shield! [*Exit.*

SCENE V.

ENGLISH SOLDIERS *hurry over the stage* *Afterwards* TALBOT

1 SOL. The Maiden in the camp!

2 SOLDIER. Impossible!
It cannot be! How came she in the camp?

3 SOL. Why through the air! The devil aided her!

1 AND 5 SOLDIERS.
Fly! fly! We are dead men!

TALBOT (*enters*)
They heed me not!—They stay not at my call!
The sacred bands of discipline are loosed!
As Hell had poured her damned legions forth,
A wild distracting impulse whirls along,
In one mad throng, the cowardly and brave.
I cannot rally e'en the smallest troop
To form a bulwark 'gainst the hostile flood,
Whose raging billows press into our camp!
—Do I alone retain my sober senses,
While all around in wild delirium rave?
To fly before these weak degenerate Frenchmen
Whom we in twenty battles have o'erthrown?—
Who is she then—the irresistible—
The dread-inspiring goddess, who doth turn
At once the tide of battle, and transform
To lions bold, a herd of timid deer?
A juggling minx, who plays the well-learn'd part
Of heroine, thus to appal the brave?
A woman snatch from me all martial fame?

SOLDIER (*rushes in*).
The Maiden comes! Fly, general! fly! fly!

TALBOT (*strikes him down*).
Fly thou, thyself, to Hell! This sword shall pierce
Who talks to me of fear, or coward flight!
[*He goes out*

## Scene VI.

*The prospect opens. The English camp is seen in flames. Drums, flight and pursuit. After a while,* Montgomery *enters.*

Montgomery (*alone*).

Where shall I flee? Foes all around and death! Lo! here
The furious general, who, with threatening sword, prevents
Escape, and drives us back into the jaws of death.
The dreadful Maiden there—the terrible—who, like
Devouring flame, destruction spreads; while all around
Appears no bush wherein to hide—no sheltering cave!
Oh, would that o'er the sea I never had come here!
Me miserable! Empty dreams deluded me—
Cheap glory to achieve on Gallia's martial fields:
And I am guided by malignant destiny
Into this murd'rous fight.—Oh, were I far, far hence,
Still in my peaceful home, on Severn's flowery banks,
Where in my father's house, in sorrow and in tears,
I left my mother and my fair young bride.

[Johanna *appears in the distance*

Wo's me! What do I see! The dreadful form appears!
Arrayed in lurid light, she from the raging fire
Issues, as from the jaws of hell, a midnight ghost.
Where shall I go?—where flee? Already from afar
She seizes on me with her eye of fire, and flings
Her fatal and unerring coil, whose magic folds
With ever-tightening pressure bind my feet, and make
Escape impossible! Howe'er my heart rebels,
I am compell'd to follow with my gaze that form
Of dread!

[Johanna *advances towards him some steps; and again remains standing.*

She comes! I will not passively await
Her furious onset! Imploringly I'll clasp
Her knees! I'll sue to her for life. She is a woman
I may perchance to pity move her by my tears!

[*While he is on the point of approaching her, she draws near*

## Scene VII.

JOHANNA, MONTGOMERY.

JOHAN. Prepare to die! A British mother bore thee!
MONTGOMERY (*falls at her feet*).
Fall back, terrific one! Forbear to strike
An unprotected foe! My sword and shield
I've flung aside, and supplicating fall
Defenceless at thy feet. A ransom take!
Extinguish not the precious light of life!
With fair possessions crown'd, my father dwells
In Wales' fair land, where among verdant meads
The winding Severn rolls his silver tide,
And fifty villages confess his sway.
With heavy gold he will redeem his son,
When he shall hear I'm in the camp of France
JOHAN Deluded mortal! to destruction doomed!
Thou'rt fallen in the Maiden's hand, from which
Redemption or deliverance there is none.
Had adverse fortune given thee a prey
To the fierce tiger or the crocodile—
Hadst robbed the lion-mother of her brood—
Compassion thou mightst hope to find and pity;
But to encounter me is certain death.
For my dread compact with the spirit realm—
The stern, inviolable—bindeth me,
To slay each living thing whom battle's God,
Full charged with doom, delivers to my sword.
MONT Thy speech is fearful, but thy look is mild;
Not dreadful art thou to contemplate near;
My heart is drawn towards thy lovely form.
O! by the mildness of thy gentle sex,
Attend my prayer. Compassionate my youth.
JOHAN. Name me not woman! Speak not of my sex!
Like to the bodiless spirits, who know nought
Of earth's humanities, I own no sex;
Beneath this vest of steel there beats no heart.
MONT. . O! by Love's sacred all pervading power,
To whom all hearts yield homage, I conjure thee
At home I left behind a gentle bride,
Beauteous as thou, and rich in blooming grace;
Weeping she waiteth her betrothed's return

O! if thyself dost ever hope to love,
If in thy love thou hopest to be happy,
Then ruthless sever not two gentle hearts,
Together linked in love's most holy bond!

JOHAN. Thou dost appeal to earthly, unknown gods,
To whom I yield no homage. Of Love's bond,
By which thou dost conjure me, I know nought,
Nor ever will I know his empty service.
Defend thy life, for death doth summon thee.

MONT. Take pity on my sorrowing parents, whom
I left at home. Doubtless thou, too, hast left
Parents, who feel disquietude for thee.

JOHAN. Unhappy man! thou dost remember me
How many mothers, of this land, your arms
Have rendered childless and disconsolate;
How many gentle children fatherless;
How many fair young brides dejected widows!
Let England's mothers now be taught despair,
And learn to weep the bitter tear, oft shed
By the bereav'd and sorrowing wives of France.

MONT. 'Tis hard, in foreign lands to die unwept.

JOHAN. Who call'd you over to this foreign land,
To waste the blooming culture of our fields,
To chase the peasant from his household hearth
And in our cities' peaceful sanctuary
To hurl the direful thunderbolt of war?
In the delusion of your hearts ye thought
To plunge in servitude the freeborn French,
And to attach their fair and goodly realm,
Like a small boat to your proud English bark!
Ye fools! The royal arms of France are hung
Fast by the throne of God; and ye as soon
From the bright wain of heaven might snatch a star
As rend a single village from this realm,
Which shall remain inviolate for ever!
—The day of vengeance is at length arrived;
Not living shall ye measure back the sea,
The sacred sea—the boundary set by God
Betwixt our hostile nations—and the which
Ye ventur'd impiously to overpass.

MONTGOMERY (*lets go her hands*).
O, I must die! I feel the grasp of death!

JOHAN. Die, friend! Why tremble at the approach of death,
Of mortals the irrevocable doom?
Look upon me! I'm born a shepherd maid;
This hand, accustom'd to the peaceful crook,
Is all unused to wield the sword of death,
Yet, snatch'd away from childhood's peaceful haunts,
From the fond love of father and of sisters,
Urged by no idle dream of earthly glory,
But Heaven-appointed to achieve your ruin,
Like a destroying angel I must roam,
Spreading dire havoc round me, and at length
Myself must fall a sacrifice to death!
Never again shall I behold my home!
Still many of your people I must slay,
Still many widows make, but I at length
Myself shall perish, and fulfil my doom.
—Now thine fulfil. Arise! resume thy sword,
And let us fight for the sweet prize of life

MONTGOMERY (*stands up*).
Now, if thou art a mortal like myself,
Can weapons wound thee, it may be assign'd
To this good arm to end my country's wo,
Thee sending, sorceress, to the depths of Hell.
In God's most gracious hands I leave my fate.
Accursed one! to thine assistance call
The fiends of Hell! Now combat for thy life!

[*He seizes his sword and shield, and rushes upon her; martial music is heard in the distance. —After a short conflict* MONTGOMERY *falls*

## SCENE VIII.

JOHANNA (*alone*).
To death thy foot did bear the—fare thee well!

[*She steps away from him and remains absorbed in thought.*

Virgin, thou workest mightily in me!
My feeble arm thou dost endue with strength,
And steep'st my woman's heart in cruelty.
In pity melts the soul and the hand trembles,
As it did violate some sacred fane,
To mar the goodly person of the foe.

Once I did shudder at the polish'd sheath,
But when 'tis needed, I'm possess'd with strength,
And as it were itself a thing of life,
The fatal weapon, in my trembling grasp,
Self-swayed, inflicteth the unerring stroke.

## SCENE IX.

A KNIGHT *with closed visor*, JOHANNA.

KNIGHT. Accursed one! thy hour of death is come!
Long have I sought thee on the battle field,
Fatal delusion! get thee back to hell,
Whence thou didst issue forth.
JOHANNA. Say, who art thou,
Whom his bad genius sendeth in my way?
Princely thy port, no Briton dost thou seem,
For the Burgundian colours stripe thy shield,
Before the which my sword inclines its point.
KNIGHT. Vile castaway! Thou all unworthy art
To fall beneath a prince's noble hand.
The hangman's axe should thy accursed head
Cleave from thy trunk, unfit for such vile use
The royal duke of Burgundy's brave sword.
JOHAN. Art thou indeed that noble duke himself?
KNIGHT (*raises his visor*).
I'm he, vile creature, tremble and despair!
The arts of hell shall not protect thee more,
Thou hast till now weak dastards overcome;
Now thou dost meet a man.

## SCENE X.

DUNOIS *and* LA HIRE. *The same.*

DUNOIS. Hold, Burgundy!
Turn! combat now with men, and not with maid.
HIRE. . We will defend the holy prophetess;
First must thy weapon penetrate this breast.--
BURG. . I fear not this seducing Circe; no,
Nor you, whom she hath changed so shamefully!
Oh blush, Dunois! and do thou blush, La Hire!
To stoop thy valour to these hellish arts—
To be shield-bearer to a sorceress!

Come one—come all! He only who despairs
Of Heaven's protection, seeks the aid of Hell.
[*They prepare for combat,* JOHANNA *steps between*

JOHAN. Forbear!

BURGUNDY. Dost tremble for thy lover? Thus
Before thine eyes he shall—
[*He makes a thrust at* DUNOIS

JOHANNA. Dunois, forbear!
Part them, La Hire! no blood of France must flow:
Not hostile weapons must this strife decide.
Above the stars 'tis otherwise decreed.
Fall back! I say—Attend and venerate
The Spirit, which hath seized, which speaks through me!

DUNOIS. Why, Maiden, now hold back my upraised arm?
Why check the just decision of the sword?
My weapon pants to deal the fatal blow
Which shall avenge and heal the woes of France.
[*She places herself in the midst and separates the parties.*

JOHAN. Fall back, Dunois! Stand where thou art, La Hire!
Somewhat I have to say to Burgundy.
[*When all is quiet*
What wouldst thou, Burgundy? Who is the foe
Whom eagerly thy murderous glances seek?
This prince is, like thyself, a son of France,—
This hero is thy countryman, thy friend;
I am a daughter of thy fatherland.
We all, whom thou art eager to destroy,
Are of thy friends;—our longing arms prepare
To clasp, our bending knees to honour thee.—
Our sword 'gainst thee is pointless, and that face
E'en in a hostile helm is dear to us,
For there we trace the features of our king.

BURG. What, syren! wilt thou with seducing words
Allure thy victim? Cunning sorceress,
Me thou deludest not. Mine ears are closed
Against thy treacherous words; and vainly dart
Thy fiery glances 'gainst this mail of proof.

To arms, Dunois!
With weapons let us fight, and not with words.

DUNOIS. First words, then weapons, Burgundy! Do words
With dread inspire thee? 'Tis a coward's fear,
And the betrayer of an evil cause.

JOHAN. 'Tis not imperious necessity
Which throws us at thy feet! We do not come
As suppliants before thee.—Look around!
The English tents are level with the ground,
And all the field is cover'd with your slain.
Hark! the war-trumpets of the French resound:
God hath decided—ours the victory!
Our new-cull'd laurel garland with our friend
We fain would share.—Come, noble fugitive!
Oh come where justice and where victory dwell!
Even I, the messenger of Heaven, extend
A sister's hand to thee. I fain would save
And draw thee over to our righteous cause!
Heaven hath declared for France! Angelic powers,
Unseen by thee, do battle for our King;
With lilies are the holy ones adorn'd.
Pure as this radiant banner is our cause;
Its blessed symbol is the Queen of Heaven.

BURG. Falsehood's fallacious words are full of guile,
But hers are pure and simple as a child's.
If evil spirits borrow this disguise,
They copy innocence triumphantly.
I'll hear no more. To arms, Dunois! to arms!
Mine ear, I feel, is weaker than mine arm.

JOHAN. You call me an enchantress, and accuse
Of hellish arts.—Is it the work of Hell
To heal dissension and to foster peace?
Comes holy concord from the depths below?
Say, what is holy, innocent, and good,
If not to combat for our fatherland?
Since when hath nature been so self-opposed,
That Heaven forsakes the just and righteous cause,
While Hell protects it? If my words are true,
Whence could I draw them but from Heaven above?
Who ever sought me in my shepherd-walks,

To teach the humble maid affairs of state?
I ne'er have stood with princes, to these lips
Unknown the arts of eloquence. Yet now,
When I have need of it to touch thy heart,
Insight and varied knowledge I possess;
The fate of empires and the doom of kings
Lie clearly spread before my childish mind,
And words of thunder issue from my mouth.

BURGUNDY (*greatly moved, looks at her with emotion and astonishment*).

How is it with me? Doth some heavenly power
Thus strangely stir my spirit's inmost depths?
—This pure, this gentle creature cannot lie!
No, if enchantment blinds me, 'tis from Heaven.
My spirit tells me she is sent from God.

JOHAN. Oh he is mov'd! I have not pray'd in vain,
Wrath's thundercloud dissolves in gentle tears,
And leaves his brow, while mercy's golden beams
Break from his eyes and gently promise peace.
—Away with arms, now clasp him to your hearts,
He weeps—he's conquer'd, he is ours once more!

[*Her sword and banner fall; she hastens to him with outstretched arms, and embraces him in great agitation.* LA HIRE *and* DUNOIS *throw down their swords, and hasten also to embrace him.*

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## ACT III.

*Residence of the* KING *at Chalons on the Marne.*

### SCENE I.

DUNOIS, LA HIRE.

DUNOIS. We have been true heart-friends, brothers in arms,
Still have we battled in a common cause,
And held together amid toil and death.
Let not the love of woman rend the bond
Which hath resisted every stroke of fate.

HIRE. Hear me, my Prince!

DUNOIS. You love the wondrous maid,

And well I know the purpose of your heart
You think without delay to seek the King,
And to entreat him to bestow on you
Her hand in marriage.—Of your bravery
The well-earn'd guerdon, he cannot refuse
But know,—ere I behold her in the arms
Of any other—

LA HIRE. Listen to me, Prince!

DUNOIS. 'Tis not the fleeting passion of the eye
Attracts me to her. My unconquer'd sense
Had set at nought the fiery shafts of love
Till I beheld this wondrous maiden, sent
By a divine appointment to become
The saviour of this kingdom, and my wife;
And on the instant in my heart I vow'd
A sacred oath, to bear her home, my bride.
For she alone who is endowed with strength
Can be the strong man's friend. This glowing heart
Longs to repose upon a kindred breast,
Which can sustain and comprehend its strength.

HIRE. How dare I venture, Prince, my poor deserts
To measure with your name's heroic fame!
When Count Dunois appeareth in the lists,
Each humbler suitor must forsake the field;
Still it doth ill become a shepherd maid
To stand as consort by your princely side.
The royal current in your veins would scorn
To mix with blood of baser quality.

DUNOIS. She, like myself, is holy Nature's child,
A child divine—hence we by birth are equal
She bring dishonour on a prince's hand,
Who is the holy Angel's bride, whose head
Is by a heavenly glory circled round,
Whose radiance far outshineth earthly crowns,
Who seeth lying far beneath her feet
All that is greatest, highest, of this earth;
For thrones on thrones, ascending to the stars,
Would fail to reach the height where she abides
In angel majesty!

HIRE Our Monarch must decide.

DUNOIS. Not so! she must
Decide! Free hath she made this realm of France,
And she herself must freely give her heart
HIRE. Here comes the King!

SCENE II.

CHARLES, AGNES SOREL, DU CHATEL, *and* CHATILLON
*The same*

CHARLES (*to* CHATILLON).
He comes! My title he will recognise,
And do me homage as his sovereign Liege?
CHATIL Here, in his royal town of Chalons, Sire,
The Duke, my master, will fall down before thee.
—He did command me, as my lord and king,
To give thee greeting. He'll be here anon.
SOREL He comes! Hail beauteous and auspicious day,
Which bringeth joy, and peace, and reconcilement!
CHATIL. The Duke, attended by two hundred knights,
Will hither come; he at thy feet will kneel;
But he expecteth not that thou to him
Shouldst yield the cordial greeting of a kinsman
CHAS I long to clasp him to my throbbing heart.
CHATIL. The Duke entreats that at this interview,
No word be spoken of the ancient strife!
CHAS. In Lethe be the past for ever sunk!
The smiling future now invites our gaze
CHATIL. All who have combated for Burgundy
Shall be included in the amnesty.
CHAS. . So shall my realm be doubled in extent!
CHATIL. Queen Isabel, if she consent thereto,
Shall also be included in the peace.
CHAS. . She maketh war on me, not I on her.
With her alone it rests to end our quarrel
CHATIL. Twelve knights shall answer for thy royal word
CHAS. . My word is sacred.
CHATILLON. The Archbishop shall
Between you break the consecrated host,
As pledge and seal of cordial reconcilement
CHAS. . Let my eternal weal be forfeited,
If my hand's friendly grasp belie my heart.
What other surety doth the Duke require?

CHATILLON (*glancing at* DU CHATEL).
I see one standing here, whose presence, Sire,
Perchance might poison the first interview.
[DU CHATEL *retires in silence.*
CHAS. . Depart, Du Châtel, and remain conceal'd
Until the Duke can bear thee in his sight.
[*He follows him with his eye, then hastens after and embraces him.*
True-hearted friend! Thou wouldst far more than this
Have done for my repose! [*Exit* DU CHATEL.
CHATIL. This instrument doth name the other points.
CHARLES (*to the* ARCHBISHOP).
Let it be settled. We agree to all.
We count no price too high to gain a friend.
Go now, Dunois, and with a hundred knights,
Give courteous conduct to the noble Duke.
Let the troops, garlanded with verdant boughs,
Receive their comrades with a joyous welcome.
Be the whole town arrayed in festal pomp,
And let the bells with joyous peal, proclaim
That France and Burgundy are reconcil'd.
[*A* PAGE *enters. Trumpets sound*
Hark! What importeth that loud trumpet's call?
PAGE. . The Duke of Burgundy hath stayed his march. [*Exit*
DUNOIS. Up! forth to meet him!
[*Exit with* LA HIRE *and* CHATILLON
CHARLES (*to* SOREL).
My Agnes! thou dost weep! Even my strength
Doth almost fail me at this interview.
How many victims have been doom'd to fall
Ere we could meet in peace and reconcilement!
But every storm at length suspends its rage,
Day follows on the murkiest night; and still
When comes the hour, the latest fruits mature!
ARCHBISHOP (*at the window*).
The thronging crowds impede the Duke's advance;
He scarce can free himself. They lift him now
From off his horse; they kiss his spurs, his mantle
CHAS. . They're a good people, in whom love flames forth
As suddenly as wrath.—In how brief space
They do forget that 'tis this very Duke

Who slew, in fight, their fathers and their sons;
The moment swallows up the whole of life!
—Be tranquil, Sorel! E'en thy passionate joy
Perchance might to his conscience prove a thorn.
Nothing should either shame or grieve him here.

## Scene III.

*The* Duke of Burgundy, Dunois, La Hire, Chatillon, *and two other Knights of the* Duke's *train. The* Duke *remains standing at the door; the* King *inclines towards him;* Burgundy *immediately advances, and in the moment when he is about to throw himself upon his knees, the* King *receives him in his arms.*

Chas. You have surprised us—it was our intent
To fetch you hither—but your steeds are fleet.
Burg.. They bore me to my duty.
[*He embraces* Sorel, *and kisses her brow*
With your leave!
At Arms, niece, it is our privilege,
And no fair damsel may exemption claim.
Chas. . Rumour doth speak your court the seat of love,
The mart, where all that's beautiful must tarry
Burg.. We are a traffic-loving people, Sire;
Whate'er of costly earth's wide realms produce,
For show and for enjoyment, is displayed
Upon our mart at Bruges; but above all
There woman's beauty is pre-eminent.
Sorel More precious far is woman's truth; but it
Appeareth not upon the public mart.
Chas Kinsman, 'tis rumour'd to your prejudice,
That woman's fairest virtue you despise.
Burg. The heresy inflicteth on itself
The heaviest penalty. 'Tis well for you,
From your own heart, my King, you learn'd betimes
What a wild life hath late reveal'd to me.
[*He perceives the* Archbishop, *and extends his hand*
Most reverend minister of God! your blessing!
You still are to be found on duty's path,
Where those must walk who would encounter you
Archb Now let my Master call me when he will;

My heart is full, I can with joy depart,
Since that mine eyes have seen this day!

BURGUNDY (*to* SOREL). 'Tis said
That of your precious stones you robb'd yourself,
Therefrom to forge 'gainst me the tools of war?
Bear you a soul so martial? Were you then
So resolute to work my overthrow?
Well, now our strife is over; what was lost
Will in due season all be found again.
Even your jewels have return'd to you.
Against me to make war they were design'd;
Receive them from me as a pledge of peace.

[*He receives a casket from one of the Attendants, and presents it to her open.* SOREL, *embarrassed, looks at the* KING.

CHAS. . Receive this present; 'tis a twofold pledge
Of reconcilement, and of fairest love.

BURGUNDY (*placing a diamond rose in her hair*).
Why, is it not the diadem of France?
With full as glad a spirit I would place
The golden circle on this lovely brow.
[*Taking her hand significantly.*
And count on me if, at some future time,
You should require a friend!

[AGNES SOREL *bursts into tears, and steps aside. The* KING *struggles with his feelings. The bystanders contemplate the two* PRINCES *with emotion.*

BURGUNDY (*after gazing round the circle, throws himself into the* KING'S *arms*).
O, my King!

[*At the same moment the three Burgundian Knights hasten to* DUNOIS, LA HIRE, *and the* ARCHBISHOP. *They embrace each other. The two* PRINCES *remain for a time speechless in each other's arms.*

I could renounce you! I could bear you hate!

CHAS . Hush! hush! No further!

BURGUNDY. I this English King
Could crown! Swear fealty to this foreigner!
And you, my Sovereign, into ruin plunge!

CHAS . Forget it! Every thing's forgiven now!
This single moment doth obliterate all!
'Twas a malignant star! A destiny!
BURGUNDY (*grasps his hand*).
Believe me, Sire, I'll make amends for all.
Your bitter sorrow I will compensate;
You shall receive your kingdom back entire,
A solitary village shall not fail!
CHAS. We are united. Now I fear no foe.
BURG. . Trust me, it was not with a joyous spirit
That I bore arms against you. Did you know--
O wherefore sent you not this messenger?
[*Pointing to* SOREL.
I must have yielded to her gentle tears.
—Henceforth, since breast to breast we have embraced,
No power of hell again shall sever us!
My erring course ends here. His Sovereign's heart
Is the true resting place for Burgundy.
ARCHBISHOP (*steps between them*).
Ye are united, Princes! France doth rise
A renovated phœnix from its ashes.
Th' auspicious future greets us with a smile.
The country's bleeding wounds will heal again,
The villages, the desolated towns,
Rise in new splendour from their ruin'd heaps,
The fields array themselves in beauteous green—
But those who, victims of your quarrel, fell,
The dead, rise not again; the bitter tears,
Caused by your strife, remain for ever wept!
One generation hath been doom'd to wo,
On their descendants dawns a brighter day,
The gladness of the son wakes not the sire.
This the dire fruitage of your brother-strife!
Oh, Princes! learn from hence to pause with dread,
Ere from its scabbard ye unsheath the sword.
The man of power lets loose the god of war,
But not, obedient, as from fields of air
Returns the falcon to the sportsman's hand,
Doth the wild deity obey the call
Of mortal voice; nor will the Saviour's hand
A second time forth issue from the clouds.

BURG. . O Sire! an angel walketh by your side.
—Whore is she? Why do I behold her not?
CHAS. . Where is Johanna? Wherefore faileth she
To grace the festival we owe to her?
ARCHB. She loves not, Sire, the idless of the court,
And when the heavenly mandate calls her not
Forth to the world's observance, she retires,
And doth avoid the notice of the crowd!
Doubtless, unless the welfare of the realm
Claims her regard, she communes with her God,
For still a blessing on her steps attends.

## SCENE IV.

*The same.*

JOHANNA *enters. She is clad in armour, and wears a garland in her hair.*

CHAS. . Thou comest us a priestess deck'd, Johanna,
To consecrate the union form'd by thee!
BURG. . How dreadful was the Maiden in the fight!
How lovely circled by the beams of peace!
—My word, Johanna, have I now fulfill'd?
Art thou contented? Have I thine applause?
JOHAN. The greatest favour thou hast shown thyself.
Array'd in blessed light thou shinest now,
Who didst erewhile with bloody ominous ray,
Hang like a moon of terror in the heavens.
[*Looking round*
Many brave knights I find assembled here,
And joy's glad radiance beams in every eye;
One mourner, one alone I have encounter'd,
He must conceal himself, where all rejoice.
BURG. . And who is conscious of such heavy guilt,
That of our favour he must needs despair?
JOHAN May he approach? Oh tell me that he may,—
Complete thy merit. Void the reconcilement
That frees not the whole heart. A drop of hate
Remaining in the cup of joy, converts
The blessed draught to poison.—Let there be
No deed so stain'd with blood, that Burgundy
Cannot forgive it on this day of joy!

BURG. . Ha! now I understand!
JOHANNA. And thou'lt forgive?
Thou wilt indeed forgive?—Come in, Duchâtel!
[*She opens the door and leads in* DUCHATEL, *who remains standing at a distance.*
The Duke is reconciled to all his foes,
And he is so to thee.
[*Duchâtel approaches a few steps nearer, and tries to read the countenance of the* DUKE.
BURGUNDY. What makest thou
Of me, Johanna? Know'st thou what thou askest?
JOHAN. A gracious sovereign throws his portals wide,
Admitting every guest, excluding none;
As freely as the firmament the world,
So mercy must encircle friend and foe.
Impartially the sun pours forth his beams
Through all the regions of infinity;
The heaven's reviving dew falls every where,
And brings refreshment to each thirsty plant;
Whate'er is good, and cometh from on high,
Is universal, and without reserve;
But in the heart's recesses darkness dwells!
BURG. . Oh, she can mould me to her wish; my heart
Is in her forming hand like melted wax.
—Duchâtel, I forgive thee—come, embrace me!
Shade of my sire! oh, not with wrathful eye
Behold me clasp the hand that shed thy blood.
Ye death-gods, reckon not to my account,
That my dread oath of vengeance I abjure.
With you, in yon drear realm of endless night,
There beats no human heart, and all remains
Eternal, stedfast, and immoveable.
Here in the light of day 'tis otherwise.
Man, living feeling man, is aye the sport
Of the o'ermast'ring present.
CHARLES (*to* JOHANNA). Lofty maid!
What owe I not to thee! How truly now
Hast thou fulfill'd thy word,—how rapidly
Reversed my destiny! Thou hast appeased
My friends, and in the dust o'erwhelm'd my foes;

From foreign yoke redeem'd my cities.—Thou
Hast all achieved.—Speak, how can I reward thee?

JOHAN Sire, in prosperity be still humane,
As in misfortune thou hast ever been;
—And on the height of greatness ne'er forget
The value of a friend in times of need;
Thou hast approved it in adversity.
Refuse not to the lowest of thy people
The claims of justice and humanity,
For thy deliv'rer from the fold was call'd.
Beneath thy royal sceptre, thou shalt gather
The realm entire of France. Thou shalt become
The root and ancestor of mighty kings;
Succeeding monarchs, in their regal state,
Shall those outshine, who fill'd the throne before
Thy stock, in majesty shall bloom so long
As it stands rooted in the people's love.
Pride only can achieve its overthrow,
And from the lowly station, whence to-day
God summon'd thy deliv'rer, ruin dire
Obscurely threats thy crime-polluted sons!

BURG. Exalted maid! Possessed with sacred fire!
If thou canst look into the gulf of time,
Speak also of my race! Shall coming years
With ampler honours crown my princely line?

JOHAN High as the throne, thou, Burgundy, hast built
Thy seat of power, and thy aspiring heart
Would raise still higher, even to the clouds,
The lofty edifice.—But from on high
A hand omnipotent shall check its rise.
Fear thou not hence the downfall of thy house!
Its glory in a maiden shall survive;
Upon her breast shall sceptre-bearing kings,
The people's shepherds, bloom. Their ample sway
Shall o'er two realms extend, they shall ordain
Laws to control the known world, and the new,
Which God still hails behind the pathless waves.

CHAS. O, if the Spirit doth reveal it, speak;
Shall this alliance which we now renew
In distant ages still unite our sons?

JOHANNA (*after a pause*).
Sovereigns and kings! disunion shun with dread!
Wake not contention from the murky cave
Where he doth lie asleep, for once aroused
He cannot soon be quell'd! He doth beget
An iron brood, a ruthless progeny;
Wildly the sweeping conflagration spreads.
—Be satisfied! Seek not to question further!
In the glad present let your hearts rejoice,
The future let me shroud!
SOREL. Exalted maid!
Thou canst explore my heart, thou readest there
If after worldly greatness it aspires,
To me too give a joyous oracle.
JOHAN. Of empires only I discern the doom;
In thine own bosom lies thy destiny!
DUNOIS. What, holy maid, will be thy destiny?
Doubtless, for thee, who art belov'd of Heaven,
The fairest earthly happiness shall bloom,
For thou art pure and holy.
JOHANNA Happiness
Abideth yonder, with our God, in Heaven.
CHAS. Thy fortune be henceforth thy Monarch's care!
For I will glorify thy name in France,
And the remotest age shall call thee blest.
Thus I fulfil my word.—Kneel down!
[*He draws his sword and touches her with it.*
And rise
A noble! I, thy Monarch, from the dust
Of thy mean birth exalt thee.—In the grave
Thy fathers I ennoble—thou shalt bear
Upon thy shield the fleur-de-lis, and be
Of equal lineage with the best in France.
Only the royal blood of Valois shall
Be nobler than thine own! The highest peer
Shall feel himself exalted by thy hand;
To wed thee nobly, maid, shall be my care.
DUNOIS (*advancing*).
My heart made choice of her when she was owly
The recent honour which encircles her,
Neither exalts her merit, nor my love.

Here in my sovereign's presence, and before
This holy bishop, maid, I tender thee
My hand, and take thee as my princely wife,
If thou esteem me worthy to be thine.

CHAS. . Resistless maiden! wonder thou dost add
To wonder! Yes, I now believe that nought's
Impossible to thee. Thou hast subdued
This haughty heart, which still hath scoff'd till now,
At Love's omnipotence.

LA HIRE (*advancing*). If I have read
Aright Johanna's soul, her modest heart's
Her fairest jewel.—She deserveth well
The homage of the great, but her desires
Soar not so high.—She striveth not to reach
A giddy eminence; an honest heart's
True love contents her, and the quiet lot
Which with this hand I humbly proffer her.

CHAS. . Thou too, La Hire! two brave competitors,—
Peers in heroic virtue and renown!
—Wilt thou, who hast appeased mine enemies,
My realms united, part my dearest friends?
One only can possess her; I esteem
Each to be justly worthy such a prize.
Speak, maid! thy heart alone must here decide.

SOREL. The noble maiden is surprised, her cheek
Is crimson'd over with a modest blush.
Let her have leisure to consult her heart,
And in confiding friendship to unseal
Her long-closed bosom. Now the hour is come
When, with a sister's love, I also may
Approach the maid severe, and offer her
This silent faithful breast.—Permit us women
Alone to weigh this womanly affair;
Do you await the issue.

CHARLES (*about to retire*). Be it so!

JOHAN. No, Sire, not so! the crimson on my cheek
Is not the blush of bashful modesty.
Nought have I for this noble lady's ear
Which in this presence I may not proclaim.
The choice of these brave knights much honours me,
But I did not forsake my shepherd-walks,

To chase vain worldly splendour, nor array
My tender frame in panoply of war,
To twine the bridal garland in my hair.
Far other labour is assign'd to me,
Which a pure maiden can alone achieve
I am the soldier of the Lord of Hosts,
And to no mortal man can I be wife.

ARCHB. To be a fond companion unto man
Is woman born—when nature she obeys,
Most wisely she fulfils high Heaven's decree!
When his behest who call'd thee to the field
Shall be accomplish'd, thou'lt resign thine arms
And once again rejoin the softer sex,
Whose gentle nature thou dost now forego,
And which from war's stern duties is exempt.

JOHAN Most reverend Sir! as yet I cannot say
What work the Spirit will enjoin on me.
But when the time comes round, his guiding voice
Will not be mute, and it I will obey.
Now he commands me to complete my task,
My royal Master's brow is still uncrown'd,
Still unanointed is his sacred head;
My Sovereign cannot yet be call'd a king.

CHAS. . We are advancing on the way to Rheims.

JOHAN. Let us not linger, for the enemy
Is planning how to intercept thy course:
I will conduct thee through the midst of them!

DUNOIS. And when thy holy mission is fulfill'd,
When we in triumph shall have enter'd Rheims,
Wilt thou not then permit me, sacred maid—

JOHAN. If Heaven ordain that, from the strife of death,
Crown'd with the wreath of conquest, I return,
My task will be accomplish'd—and the maid
Hath, thenceforth, in the palace nought to do.

CHARLES (*taking her hand*).
It is the Spirit's voice impels thee now;
Love in thy bosom, Heaven-inspir'd, is mute;
'Twill not be ever so; believe me, maid!
Our weapons will repose, and victory
Will by the hand lead forward gentle peace

Joy will return again to every breast,
And softer feelings wake in every heart,—
They will awaken also in thy breast,
And tears of gentle longing thou wilt weep,
Such as thine eye hath never shed before;
—This heart, which Heaven now occupies alone,
Will fondly open to an earthly friend—
Thousands thou hast till now redeem'd and bless'd,
Thou wilt at length conclude by blessing one!

JOHAN. Art weary, Dauphin, of the heavenly vision,
That thou its vessel wouldst annihilate?
The holy maiden, sent to thee by God,
Degrade, reducing her to common dust?
Ye blind of heart! O ye of little faith!
God's glory shines around you; to your gaze
He doth reveal his wonders, and ye see
Nought but a woman in me. Dare a woman
In iron panoply array herself,
And boldly mingle in the strife of men?
Wo, wo is me! if e'er my hand should wield
The avenging sword of God, and my vain heart
Cherish affection to a mortal man!
'Twere better for me I had ne'er been born!
Henceforth no more of this, unless ye would
Provoke the Spirit's wrath who in me dwells!
The eye of man, regarding me with love,
To me is horror and profanity.

CHAS. Forbear! It is in vain to urge her further.

JOHAN. Command the trumpets of the war to sound!
This stillness doth perplex and harass me;
An inward impulse drives me from repose,
It still impels me to achieve my work,
And sternly beckons me to meet my doom.

## SCENE V.

*A Knight, entering hastily.*

CHAS. What tidings? Speak!

KNIGHT. The foe has cross'd the Marne,
And marshalleth his army for the fight.

JOHANNA (*inspired*).
Battle and tumult! Now my soul is free.
Arm, warriors, arm! while I prepare the troops.
[*She goes out.*
CHAS. . Follow, La Hire! E'en at the gates of Rheims
They will compel us to dispute the crown!
DUNOIS. No genuine courage prompts them. This essay
Is the last effort of enraged despair.
CHAS. . I do not urge you, Duke. To-day's the time
To compensate the errors of the past.
BURG. . You shall be satisfied with me.
CHARLES. Myself
Will march before you on the path of fame;
Here, with my royal town of Rheims in view,
I'll fight, and gallantly achieve the crown.
Thy knight, my Agnes, bids thee now farewell!
AGNES (*embracing him*).
I do not weep, I do not tremble for thee;
My faith, unshaken, cleaveth unto God!
Heaven, were we doom'd to failure, had not given
So many gracious pledges of success!
My heart doth whisper me that, victory-crown'd,
In conquer'd Rheims, I shall embrace my King.
[*Trumpets sound with a spirited tone, and while the scene is changing, pass into a wild martial strain. When the scene opens, the orchestra joins in, accompanied by warlike instruments behind the scene.*

## SCENE VI.

*The Scene changes to an open country, skirted with trees During the music, Soldiers are seen retreating hastily acro the back-ground.*

TALBOT, *leaning on* FASTOLFE, *and accompanied by Soldier Soon after,* LIONEL.

TALBOT. Here lay me down, beneath these trees, and then
Betake you back, with speed, unto the fight;
I need no aid to die.
FASTOLFE. Oh woful day! [LIONEL *enters*
Behold what sight awaits you, Lionel!

Here lies our General, wounded unto death.
LIONEL. Now, God forbid! My noble Lord, arise!
No moment this to falter and to sink.
Yield not to death. By your all-powerful will,
Command your ebbing spirit still to live.
TALBOT. In vain! The day of destiny is come,
Which will o'erthrow the English power in France.
In desperate combat I have vainly risk'd
The remnant of our force to ward it off.
Struck by the thunderbolt I prostrate lie,
Never to rise again.—Rheims now is lost,
Hasten to succour Paris!
LIONEL. Paris is with the Dauphin reconcil'd;
A courier even now hath brought the news.
TALBOT (*tearing off his bandages*).
Then freely flow, ye currents of my blood,
For Talbot now is weary of the sun!
LIONEL. I may no longer tarry: Fastolfe, haste!
Convey our leader to a place of safety.
No longer now can we maintain this post;
Our flying troops disperse on every side,
On, with resistless might, the Maiden comes.
TALBOT. Folly, thou conquerest, and I must yield!
Against stupidity the very gods
Themselves contend in vain. Exalted reason,
Resplendent daughter of the head divine,
Wise foundress of the system of the world,
Guide of the stars, who art thou then, if thou,
Bound to the tail of folly's uncurb'd steed,
Must, vainly shrieking, with the drunken crowd,
Eyes open, plunge down headlong in the abyss.
Accurs'd, who striveth after noble ends,
And with deliberate wisdom forms his plans!
To the fool-king belongs the world—
LIONEL. My Lord
But for a few brief moments can you live—
Think of your Maker!
TALBOT. Had we, like brave men,
Been vanquished by the brave, we might, indeed,
Console ourselves that 'twas the common lot;
For fickle fortune aye revolves her wheel.

But to be baffled by such juggling arts!
Deserv'd our earnest and laborious life
Not a more earnest issue?

LIONEL (*extends his hand to him*). Fare you well!
The debt of honest tears I will discharge
After the battle—if I then survive.
Now Fate doth call me hence, where on the field
Her web she weaveth, and dispenseth doom.
We in another world shall meet again;
For our long friendship, this a brief farewell. [*Exit*

TALBOT. Soon is the struggle past, and to the earth,
To the eternal sun, I render back
These atoms, join'd in me for pain and pleasure
And of the mighty Talbot, who the world
Fill'd with his martial glory, there remains
Nought save a modicum of senseless dust.
—Such is the end of man!—the only spoil
We carry with us from life's battle-field,
Is but an insight into nothingness,
And utter scorn of all which once appear'd
To us exalted and desirable.—

## SCENE VII

CHARLES, BURGUNDY, DUNOIS, DU CHATEL, *and Soldiers*

BURG.. The trench is storm'd!

DUNOIS. The victory is ours!

CHARLES (*perceiving* TALBOT).
Look! Who is he, who yonder of the sun
Taketh reluctant, sorrowful farewell?
His armour indicates no common man;
Go, succour him, if aid may yet avail.
[*Soldiers of the* KING'S *retinue step forward*

FASTOL. Back! Stand apart! Respect the mighty dead,
Whom ye, in life, ne'er ventur'd to approach!

BURG.. What do I see? Lord Talbot in his blood!
[*He approaches him.* TALBOT *gazes fixedly at him, and dies.*

FASTOL. Traitor avaunt! Let not the sight of thee
Poison the dying hero's parting glance.

DUNOIS. Resistless hero! Dread-inspiring Talbot!
Does such a narrow space suffice thee now,

And this vast kingdom could not satisfy
The large ambition of thy giant soul!
—Now first I can salute you, Sire, as King:
The diadem but totter'd on your brow,
While yet a spirit tenanted this clay.

CHARLES (*after contemplating the body in silence*).
A higher power hath vanquish'd him, not we!
He lies upon the soil of France, as lies
The hero on the shield he would not quit.
Well, peace be with his ashes! Bear him hence!
[*Soldiers take up the body and carry it away*
Here, in the heart of France, where his career
Of conquest ended, let his reliques lie!
So far no hostile sword attain'd before.
A fitting tomb shall memorize his name;
His epitaph the spot whereon he fell.

FASTOLFE (*yielding his sword*).
I am your prisoner, Sir.

CHARLES (*returning his sword*). Not so! Rude war
Respects each pious office; you are free
To render the last honours to the dead.
Go now, Du Châtel,—still my Agnes trembles—
Hasten to snatch her from anxiety—
Bring her the tidings of our victory,
And usher her in triumph into Rheims!
[*Exit* DU CHATEL.

## SCENE VIII.

*The same.* LA HIRE.

DUNOIS. La Hire, where is the Maiden?

LA HIRE. That I ask
Of you; I left her fighting by your side.

DUNOIS. I thought she was protected by your arm,
When I departed to assist the King.

BURG.. Not long ago I saw her banner wave
Amid the thickest of the hostile ranks.

DUNOIS. Alas! where is she? Evil I forebode!
Come, let us haste to rescue her.—I fear
Her daring soul hath led her on too far;
Alone, she combats in the midst of foes,
And without succour yieldeth to the crowd.

CHAS. Haste to her rescue!
LA HIRE. Come!
BURGUNDY. We follow all! [*Exit.*
[*They retire in haste.*

*A deserted part of the battle-field. In the distance are seen the towers of Rheims illumined by the sun.*

## SCENE IX.

*A* KNIGHT *in black armour, with closed visor.* JOHANNA *follows him to the front of the stage, where he stops and awaits her.*

JOHAN. Deluder! now I see thy stratagem!
Thou hast deceitfully, through seeming flight,
Allur'd me from the battle, doom and death
Averting thus from many a British head.
Destruction now doth overtake thyself.
KNIGHT. Why dost thou follow after me and track
My steps with quenchless rage? I am not doom'd
To perish by thy hand.
JOHANNA. Deep in my soul
I hate thee as the night, which is thy colour
To blot thee out from the fair light of day
An irresistible desire impels me.
Who art thou? Raise thy visor.—I had said
That thou wert Talbot, had I not myself
Seen warlike Talbot in the battle fall.
KNIGHT Is the divining Spirit mute in thee?
JOHAN. His voice speaks loudly in my spirit's depths
The near approach of wo
BLACK KNIGHT. Johanna D'Arc!
Borne on the wings of conquest, thou hast reach'd
The gates of Rheims. Let thy achiev'd renown
Content thee Fortune, like thy slave, till now
Hath follow'd thee; dismiss her, ere in wrath
She free herself; fidelity she hates;
She serveth none with constancy till death
JOHAN Why check me in the midst of my career?
Why bid me falter and forsake my work?
I will complete it, and fulfil my vow!
KNIGHT. Nothing can thee, thou mighty one, withstand,

In battle thou art aye invincible.
—But henceforth shun the fight; attend my warning.

JOHAN. Not from my hand will I resign this sword
Till haughty England's prostrate in the dust.

KNIGHT. Behold! there Rheims ariseth with its towers,
The goal and end of thy career.—'Thou seest
The lofty minster's sun-illumin'd dome;
Thou in triumphal pomp wouldst enter there,
Thy Monarch crown, and ratify thy vow.
—Enter not there! Return! Attend my warning!

JOHAN. What art thou, double-tongue'd, deceitful being,
Who wouldst bewilder and appal me? Speak!
By what authority dost thou presume
To greet me with fallacious oracles?
[*The* BLACK KNIGHT *is about to depart, she steps in his way.*
No, thou shalt speak, or perish by my hand!
[*She endeavours to strike him.*

BLACK KNIGHT (*touches her with his hand, she remains motionless*).
Slay, what is mortal!
[*Darkness, thunder and lightning. The* KNIGHT *sinks into the earth.*

JOHANNA (*stands at first in amazement, but soon recovers herself*).
'Twas nothing living. 'Twas a base delusion,
An instrument of Hell, a juggling fiend,
Uprisen hither from the fiery pool
To shake and terrify my stedfast heart.
Wielding the sword of God, whom should I fear?
I will triumphantly achieve my work.
My courage should not waver, should not fail
Were Hell itself to champion me to fight!
[*She is about to depart*

## SCENE X.

LIONEL, JOHANNA.

LIONEL. Accursed one, prepare thee for the fight!
—Not both of us shall quit this field alive.
Thou hast destroy'd the bravest of our host:

The noble Talbot hath his mighty soul
Breathed forth upon my bosom.—I'll avenge
The hero, or participate his doom.
And wouldst thou know who brings thee glory now,
Whether he live or die,—I'm Lionel,
The sole survivor of the English chiefs,
And still unconquer'd is this valiant arm.

[*He rushes upon her; after a short combat she strikes the sword out of his hand.*

Perfidious fortune!

[*He wrestles with her.* JOHANNA *seizes him by the crest and tears open his helmet; his face is thus exposed; at the same time she draws her sword with her right hand.*

JOHANNA. Suffer what thou soughtest!
The Virgin sacrifices thee through me!

[*At this moment she gazes in his face. His aspect softens her, she remains motionless and slowly lets her arm sink.*

LIONEL. Why linger, why withhold the stroke of death?
My glory thou hast taken—take my life!
I want no mercy, I am in thy power.

[*She makes him a sign with her hand to fly*

How! shall I fly, and owe my life to thee?
No, I would rather die!

JOHANNA (*with averted face*). I will not know
That ever thou didst owe thy life to me.

LIONEL. I hate alike thee and thy proffer'd gift.
I want no mercy—kill thine enemy,
Who loathes and would have slain thee.

JOHANNA. Slay me then,
And fly!

LIONEL. Ha! What is this?

JOHANNA (*hiding her face*). Wo's me!

LIONEL (*approaching her*). 'Tis said
Thou killest all the English, whom thy sword
Subdues in battle—why spare me alone?

JOHANNA (*raises her sword with a rapid movement, as if to strike him, but lets it fall quickly when she gazes on his face*).
O Holy Virgin!

LIONEL. Wherefore namest thou
The Holy Virgin? she knows nought of thee;
Heaven hath no part in thee.
JOHANNA (*in the greatest anxiety*). What have I done!
Alas! I've broke my vow!
[*She wrings her hands in despair*
LIONEL (*looks at her with sympathy and approaches her*)
Unhappy Maid!
I pity thee! Thy sorrow touches me;
Thou hast shown mercy unto me alone,
My hatred yielded unto sympathy!
—Who art thou, and whence comest thou
JOHANNA. Away!
LIONEL. Thy youth, thy beauty, move my soul to pity!
Thy look sinks in my heart. I fain would save thee - -
How may I do so? tell me. Come! oh come!
Renounce this fearful league—throw down these arms!
JOHAN. I am unworthy now to carry them!
LIONEL. Then throw them from thee—quick! come follow me!
JOHANNA (*with horror*).
How! follow thee!
LIONEL. Thou mayst be saved Oh come!
I will deliver thee, but linger not.
Strange sorrow for thy sake doth seize my heart,
Unspeakable desire to rescue thee—
[*He seizes her arm*
JOHAN. The Bastard comes! 'Tis they! They seek for me
If they should find thee—
LIONEL. I'll defend thee, Maid!
JOHAN. I die if thou shouldst perish by their hands!
LIONEL. Am I then dear to thee?
JOHANNA. Ye heavenly Powers!
LIONEL. Shall I again behold thee—hear from thee?
JOHAN. No! never!
LIONEL. Thus this sword I seize, in pledge
That I again behold thee!
[*He snatches her sword*
JOHANNA. Madman, hold!
Thou darest?
LIONEL. Now I yield to force—again
I'll see thee! [*He retires*

### Scene XI.

Johanna, Dunois, La Hire.

La Hire. It is she! The Maiden lives!
Dunois. Fear not, Johanna! friends are at thy side.
Hire. . Is not that Lionel who yonder flies?
Dunois. Let him escape! Maiden, the righteous cause
Hath triumph'd now. Rheims opens wide its gates;
The joyous crowds pour forth to meet their King.—
Hire. What ails the Maiden? She grows pale—she sinks!
[Johanna *grows dizzy, and is about to fall*
Dunois. She's wounded—rend her breastplate—'tis her arm!
The wound is not severe.
La Hire. Her blood doth flow.
Johan. Oh that my life would stream forth with my blood!
[*She lies senseless in* La Hire's *arms*

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## ACT IV.

*A hall adorned as for a festival; the columns are hung with garlands; behind the scene flutes and hautboys.*

### Scene I.

Johan. Hushed is the din of arms, war's storms subside,
Glad song and dance succeed the bloody fray,
Through all the streets joy echoes far and wide,
Altar and church are deck'd in rich array,
Triumphal arches rise in vernal pride,
Wreaths round the columns wind their flowery way,
Wide Rheims cannot contain the mighty throng,
Which to the joyous pageant rolls along.

One thought alone doth every heart possess,
One rapt'rous feeling o'er each breast preside.
And those to-day are link'd in happiness

Whom bloody hatred did erewhile divide.
All who themselves of Gallic race confess
The name of Frenchman own with conscious pride,
France sees the splendour of her ancient crown,
And to her Monarch's son bows humbly down.

Yet I, the author of this wide delight,
The joy, myself created, cannot share;
My heart is chang'd, in sad and dreary plight
It flies the festive pageant in despair;
Still to the British camp it taketh flight,
Against my will my gaze still wanders there,
And from the throng I steal, with grief oppress'd,
To hide the guilt which weighs upon my breast.

What! I permit a human form
To haunt my bosom's sacred cell?
And there, where heavenly radiance shone,
Doth earthly love presume to dwell?
The saviour of my country, I,
The warrior of God most high,
Burn for my country's foeman? Dare I name
Heaven's holy light, nor feel o'erwhelm'd with shame?

[*The music behind the scene passes into a soft and moving melody.*

Wo is me! Those melting tones!
They distract my 'wilder'd brain!
Every note, his voice recalling,
Conjures up his form again!

Would that spears were whizzing round!
Would that battle's thunder roar'd!
'Midst the wild tumultuous sound
My former strength were then restored.

These sweet tones, these melting voices,
With seductive power are fraught!
They dissolve, in gentle longing,
Every feeling, every thought,
Waking tears of plaintive sadness!

[*After a pause, with more energy.*
Should I have kill'd him? Could I, when I gazed
Upon his face? Kill'd him? Oh, rather far
Would I have turn'd my weapon 'gainst myself!
And am I culpable because humane?
Is pity sinful?—Pity! Didst thou hear
The voice of pity and humanity,
When others fell the victims of thy sword?
Why was she silent when the gentle youth
From Wales, entreated thee to spare his life?
O, cunning heart! Thou liest before high Heaven;
It is not pity's voice impels thee now!
—Why was I doom'd to look into his eyes!
To mark his noble features! With that glance,
Thy crime, thy wo commenc'd. Unhappy one!
A sightless instrument thy God demands,
Blindly thou must accomplish his behest!
When thou didst see, God's shield abandon'd thee,
And the dire snares of Hell around thee press'd!
[*Flutes are again heard, and she subsides into a quiet melancholy.*

Harmless staff! Oh, that I ne'er
Had for the sword abandon'd thee!
Had voices never reached mine ear,
From thy branches, sacred tree!
High Queen of Heaven! Oh would that thou
Hadst ne'er reveal'd thyself to me!
Take back—I dare not claim it now—
Take back thy crown, 'tis not for me!

I saw the heavens open wide,
I gazed upon that face of love!
Yet here on earth my hopes abide,
They do not dwell in heaven above!
Why, Holy One, on me impose
This dread vocation? Could I steel,
And to each soft emotion close
This heart, by nature form'd to feel?

Wouldst thou proclaim thy high command,
Make choice of those who, free from sin

In thy eternal mansions stand;
Send forth thy flaming cherubim!
Immortal ones, thy law they keep,
They do not feel, they do not weep!
Choose not a tender woman's aid,
Not the frail soul of shepherd maid!

Was I concern'd with warlike things,
With battles or the strife of kings?
In innocence I led my sheep
Adown the mountain's silent steep
But thou didst send me into life,
'Midst princely halls and scenes of strife,
To lose my spirit's tender bloom:
Alas, I did not seek my doom!

## Scene II.

Agnes Sorel, Johanna.

Sorel. (*advances joyfully. When she perceives* Johanna *she hastens to her and falls upon her neck; then suddenly recollecting herself, she relinquishes her hold, and falls down before her*).
No! no! not so! Before thee in the dust—

Johanna (*trying to raise her*).
Arise! Thou dost forget thyself and me.

Sorel. Forbid me not! 'tis the excess of joy
Which throws me at thy feet—I must pour forth
My o'ercharged heart in gratitude to God;
I worship the Invisible in thee.
Thou art the angel, who hast led my Lord
To Rheims, to crown him with the royal crown.
What I ne'er dream'd to see, is realized!
The coronation-march will soon set forth;
Array'd in festal pomp, the Monarch stands;
Assembled are the nobles of the realm,
The mighty peers, to bear the insignia;
To the cathedral rolls the billowy crowd;
Glad songs resound, the bells unite their peal;
Oh, this excess of joy I cannot bear!
[Johanna *gently raises her.* Agnes Sorel *pauses a moment, and surveys the* Maiden *more narrowly.*

Yet thou remainest ever grave and stern;
Thou canst create delight, yet share it not.
Thy heart is cold, thou feelest not our joy,
Thou hast beheld the glories of the skies;
No earthly interest moveth thy pure breast.
[JOHANNA *seizes her hand passionately, but soon lets it fall again.*
Oh, couldst thou own a woman's feeling heart!
Put off this armour, war is over now,
Confess thy union with the softer sex!
My loving heart shrinks timidly from thee,
While thus thou wearest Pallas' brow severe

JOHAN. What wouldst thou have me do?

SOREL. Unarm thyself!
Put off this coat of mail! The God of Love
Fears to approach a bosom clad in steel.
Oh, be a woman, thou wilt feel his power!

JOHAN. What, now unarm myself? 'Midst battle's roar
I 'll bare my bosom to the stroke of death!
Not now!—Would that a sevenfold wall of brass
Could hide me from your revels, from myself!

SOREL. Thou 'rt loved by Count Dunois. His noble heart,
Which virtue and renown alone inspire,
With pure and holy passion glows for thee
Oh, it is sweet to know oneself belov'd
By such a hero—sweeter still to love him!
[JOHANNA *turns away with aversion*
Thou hatest him?—no, no, thou only canst
Not love him:—how could hatred stir thy breast!
Those who would tear us from the one we love,
We hate alone; but none can claim thy love.
Thy heart is tranquil—if it could but feel—

JOHAN. Oh, pity me! Lament my hapless fate!

SOREL. What can be wanting to complete thy joy?
Thou hast fulfill'd thy promise, France is free,
To Rheims, in triumph, thou hast led the King,
Thy mighty deeds have gain'd thee high renown,
A happy people praise and worship thee;
Thy name, the honour'd theme of every tongue;
Thou art the goddess of this festival;

The Monarch, with his crown and regal state,
Shines not with greater majesty than thou!

JOHAN. Oh, could I hide me in the depths of earth!

SOREL. Why this emotion? Whence this strange distress?
Who may to-day look up without a fear,
If thou dost cast thine eyes upon the ground!
It is for me to blush, me, who near thee
Feel all my littleness; I cannot reach
Thy lofty virtue, thy heroic strength!
For—all my weakness shall I own to thee?
Not the renown of France, my Fatherland,
Not the new splendour of the Monarch's crown,
Not the triumphant gladness of the crowds,
Engage this woman's heart. One only form
Is in its depths enshrin'd; it hath not room
For any feeling save for one alone:
He is the idol, him the people bless,
Him they extol, for him they strew these flowers,
And he is mine, he is my own true love!

JOHAN. Oh, thou art happy! thou art bless'd indeed!
Thou lovest, where all love. Thou mayst, unblamed,
Pour forth thy rapture, and thine inmost heart
Fearless discover to the gaze of man!
Thy country's triumph is thy lover's too.
The vast, innumerable multitudes,
Who, rolling onward, crowd within these walls,
Participate thy joy, they hallow it;
Thee they salute, for thee they twine the wreath,
Thou art a portion of the general joy;
Thou lovest the all-inspiring soul, the sun,
And what thou seest is thy lover's glory!

SOREL (*falling on her neck*).
Thou dost delight me, thou canst read my heart!
I did thee wrong, thou knowest what love is,
Thou tell'st my feelings with a voice of power.
My heart forgets its fear and its reserve,
And seeks confidingly to blend with thine—

JOHANNA (*tearing herself from her with violence*).
Forsake me! Turn away! Do not pollute
Thyself by longer intercourse with me!

Be happy! go—and in the deepest night
Leave me to hide my infamy, my wo!

SOREL. Thou frighten'st me, I understand thee not,
I ne'er have understood thee—for from me
Thy dark mysterious being still was veil'd.
Who may divine what thus disturbs thy heart,
Thus terrifies thy pure and sacred soul!

JOHAN. Thou art the pure, the holy one! Couldst thou
Behold mine inmost heart, thou, shuddering,
Wouldst fly the traitoress, the enemy!

## SCENE III.

DUNOIS, DUCHATEL, *and* LA HIRE, *with the Banner of* JOHANNA.

DUNOIS. Johanna, thee we seek. All is prepared;
The King hath sent us, 'tis his royal will
That thou before him shouldst thy banner bear·
The company of princes thou shalt join,
And march immediately before the King:
For he doth not deny it, and the world
Shall witness, Maiden, that to thee alone
He doth ascribe the honour of this day.

HIRE. Here is the banner. Take it, noble Maiden!
Thou 'rt stayed for by the princes and the people.

JOHAN. I march before him? I the banner bear?

DUNOIS. Whom else would it become! What other hand
Is pure enough to bear the sacred ensign!
Amid the battle thou hast waved it oft;
To grace our glad procession bear it now.

[LA HIRE *presents the banner to her, she draws back, shuddering.*

JOHAN. Away! away!

LA HIRE. How! Art thou terrified
At thine own banner, Maiden?—Look at it!

[*He displays the banner.*

It is the same, thou didst in conquest wave.
Imaged upon it is the Queen of Heaven,
Floating in glory o'er this earthly ball;
For so the Holy Mother show'd it thee.

[JOHANNA, *gazing upon it with horror*

'Tis she herself! so she appear'd to me.
See, how she looks at me and knits her brow,
And anger flashes from her threatening eye!

SOREL. Alas, she raveth! Maiden, be composed!
Collect thyself! Thou seest nothing real!
That is her pictured image; she herself
Wanders above, amid the angelic quire!

JOHAN. Thou comest, fearful one, to punish me?
Destroy, o'erwhelm, thine arrowy lightnings hurl
And let them fall upon my guilty head.
Alas, my vow I've broken! I've profaned
And desecrated thy most holy name!

DUNOIS Wo 's us! What may this mean? What unblest words?

LA HIRE (*in astonishment, to* DUCHATEL).
This strange emotion canst thou comprehend?

DUCHAT. That which I see, I see—I long have fear'd it.

DUNOIS. What sayest thou?

DUCHATEL. I dare not speak my thoughts.
I would to Heaven that the King were crown'd!

HIRE. How! hath the awe this banner doth inspire
Turn'd back upon thyself? before this sign
Let Britons tremble; to the foes of France
'Tis fearful, but to all true citizens
It is auspicious.

JOHANNA. Yes, thou sayest truly!
To friends 'tis gracious! but to enemies
It causeth horror!

[*The Coronation march is heard.*

DUNOIS. Take thy banner, then!
The march begins—no time is to be lost!

[*They press the banner upon her; she seizes it with evident emotion, and retires; the others follow.*

[*The scene changes to an open place before the Cathedral.*

## SCENE IV.

*Spectators occupy the background;* BERTRAND, CLAUDE MARIE *and* ETIENNE *come forward; then* MARGOT *and* LOUISON *The Coronation march is heard in the distance.*

BERT. Hark to the music! They approach already!
What had we better do? Shall we mount up

Upon the platform, or press through the crowd,
That we may nothing lose of the procession?

ETIEN. It is not to be thought of. All the streets
Are throng'd with horsemen and with carriages.
Beside these houses let us take our stand
Here we without annoyance may behold
The train as it goes by.

CLAUDE MARIE. Almost it seems
As were the half of France assembled here;
So mighty is the flood that it hath reached
Even our distant Lotharingian land
And borne us hither!

BERTRAND. Who would sit at home
When great events are stirring in the land!
It hath cost plenty, both of sweat and blood,
Ere the crown rested on its rightful head!
Nor shall our lawful King, to whom we give
The crown, be worse accompanied than he
Whom the Parisians in St. Denis crown'd!
He is no loyal honest-minded man
Who doth absent him from this festival,
And joins not in the cry: "God save the King!"

## SCENE V.

*MARGOT and* LOUISON *join them.*

LOUIS. We shall again behold our sister, Margot!
How my heart beats!

MARGOT. In majesty and pomp
We shall behold her, saying to ourselves:
It is our sister, it is our Johanna!

LOUIS. Till I have seen her, I can scarce believe
That she, whom men the Maid of Orleans name,
The mighty warrior, is indeed Johanna,
Our sister whom we lost!

[*The music draws nearer*

MARGOT. Thou doubtest still!
Thou wilt thyself behold her.

BERTRAND. See, they come!

## SCENE VI.

[*Musicians, with flutes and hautboys, open the procession. Children follow, dressed in white, with branches in their hands; behind them two heralds. Then a procession of halberdiers, followed by magistrates in their robes. Then two marshals with their staves; the* DUKE *of* BURGUNDY, *bearing the sword*, DUNOIS *with the sceptre, other nobles with the regalia; others with sacrificial offerings. Behind these,* KNIGHTS *with the ornaments of their order; choristers with incense; two* BISHOPS *with the ampulla, the* ARCHBISOP *with the crucifix.* JOHANNA *follows, with her banner, she walks with downcast head and wavering steps; her sisters, on beholding her, express their astonishment and joy. Behind her comes the* KING *under a canopy, supported by four barons; courtiers follow, soldiers conclude the procession; as soon as it has entered the church the music ceases.*

## SCENE VII.

LOUISON, MARGOT, CLAUDE MARIE, ETIENNE, BERTRAND

MARG. Saw you our sister?
CLAUDE MARIE. She in golden armour,
Who with the banner walked before the King?
MARG. It was Johanna. It was she, our sister!
LOUIS. She recognised us not! She did not feel
That we, her sisters, were so near to her.
She look'd upon the ground, and seemed so pale,
And trembled so beneath her banner's weight—
When I beheld her, I could not rejoice.
MARG. So now, arrayed in splendour and in pomp,
I have beheld our sister—Who in dreams
Would ever have imagined or conceiv'd,
When on our native hills she drove the flock,
That we should see her in such majesty?
LOUIS. Our father's dream is realized, that we
In Rheims before our sister should bow down.
That is the church, which in his dream he saw,
And each particular is now fulfilled.

But images of wo he also saw!
Alas! I'm griev'd to see her raised so high!
BERT. . Why stand we idly here? Let 's to the church
To view the coronation!
MARGOT. Yes! Perchance
We there may meet our sister; let us go!
LOUIS. . We have beheld her. Let us now return
Back to our village.
MARGOT. How? Ere we with her
Have interchanged a word?
LOUISON. She doth belong
To us no longer; she with princes stands
And monarchs.—Who are we, that we should seek
With foolish vanity to near her state?
She was a stranger, while she dwelt with us!
MARG. . Will she despise, and treat us with contempt?
BERT. . The King himself is not ashamed of us,
He kindly greets the meanest of the crowd.
How high so ever she may be exalted,
The King is raised still higher!
[*Trumpets and kettle-drums are heard from the church.*
CLAUDE MARIE. Let 's to the church!
[*They hasten to the background, where they are lost among the crowd.*

## SCENE VIII.

THIBAUT *enters, clad in black.* RAIMOND *follows him, and tries to hold him back.*

RAIM. . Stay, father Thibaut! Do not join the crowds!
Here, at this joyous festival you meet
None but the happy, whom your grief offends.
Come! Let us quit the town with hasty steps.
THIB. . Hast thou beheld my child? My wretched child?
Didst thou observe her?
RAIMOND. I entreat you, fly!
THIB. . Didst mark her tottering and uncertain steps,
Her countenance, so pallid and disturb'd?
She feels her dreadful state; the hour is come
To save my child, and I will not neglect it.
[*He is about to retire*

RAIM . What would you do?
THIBAUT. Surprise her, hurl her down
From her vain happiness, and forcibly
Restore her to the God whom she denies.
RAIM. . O do not work the ruin of your child!
THIB. . If her soul lives, her mortal part may die.
[JOHANNA *rushes out of the church, without her banner. The people press around her, worship her, and kiss her garments. She is detained in the background by the crowd.*
She comes! 'tis she! She rushes from the church
Her troubled conscience drives her from the fane!
'Tis visibly the judgment of her God!
RAIM. . Farewell! Require not my attendance further!
Hopeful I came, and sorrowful depart.
Your daughter once again I have beheld,
And feel again that she is lost to me!
[*He goes out;* THIBAUT *retires on the opposite side*

## SCENE IX.

JOHANNA, *People. Afterwards her Sisters*

JOHANNA (*she has freed herself from the crowd and comes forward*).
Remain I cannot—spirits chase me forth!
The organ's pealing tones like thunder sound,
The dome's arch'd roof threatens to o'erwhelm me
I must escape and seek Heaven's wide expanse!
I left my banner in the sanctuary,
Never, oh never, will I touch it more!
It seem'd to me as if I had beheld
My sisters pass before me like a dream.
'Twas only a delusion!—They, alas!
Are far, far distant—inaccessible—
E'en as my childhood, as mine innocence!
MARGOT (*stepping forward*).
'Tis she! It is Johanna!
LOUISON (*hastening toward her*). O my sister!
JOHAN. Then it was no delusion—you are here—
Thee I embrace, Louison! Thee, my Margot!

Here, in this strange and crowded solitude,
I clasp once more my sisters' faithful breast!

MARG. She knows us still, she is our own kind sister

JOHAN. Your love hath led you to me here so far!
So very far! You are not wroth with her
Who left her home without one parting word.

LOUIS. God's unseen providence conducted thee.

MARG. Thy great renown, which agitates the world,
Which makes thy name the theme of every tongue,
Hath in our quiet village waken'd us,
And led us hither to this festival.
To witness all thy glory we are come;
And we are not alone!

JOHANNA (*quickly*). Our father 's here?
Where is he? Why doth he conceal himself?

MARG. Our father is not with us.

JOHANNA. Not with you?
He will not see me, then! You do not bring
His blessing for his child?

LOUISON. He knoweth not
That we are here

JOHANNA. Not know it! Wherefore not?
You are embarrass'd, and you do not speak:
You look upon the ground! Where is our father?

MARG. Since thou hast left—

LOUISON (*making a sign to* MARGOT).
Margot!

MARGOT. Our father hath
Become dejected.

JOHANNA. Ah!

LOUISON. Console thyself!
Our sire's foreboding spirit well thou know'st!
He will collect himself, and be composed,
When he shall learn from us that thou art happy

MARG. And thou art happy? Yes, it must be so,
For thou art great and honour'd!

JOHANNA. I am so,
Now I again behold you, once again
Your voices hear, whose fond familiar tones
Bring to my mind my dear paternal fields.

When on my native hills I drove my herd,
Then I was happy as in Paradise—
I ne'er can be so more, no, never more!

[*She hides her face on* LOUISON'S *bosom.* CLAUDE MARIE, ETIENNE, *and* BERTRAND *appear, and remain timidly standing in the distance.*

HANU. Come, Bertrand! Claude Marie! come Etienne!
Our sister is not proud: she is so gentle,
And speaks so kindly,—more so than of yore,
When in our village she abode with us.

[*They draw near, and hold out their hands;* JOHANNA *gazes on them fixedly, and appears amazed.*

JOHAN. Where am I? Tell me! Was it all a dream,
A long, long dream? And am I now awake?
Am I away from Domremi? Is 't so?
I fell asleep beneath the Druid tree,
And I am now awake; and round me stand
The kind familiar forms? I only dream'd
Of all these battles, kings, and deeds of war,—
They were but shadows which before me pass'd;
For dreams are always vivid 'neath that tree.
How did you come to Rheims? How came I here?
No, I have never quitted Domremi!
Confess it to me, and rejoice my heart.

LOUIS. We are at Rheims. Thou hast not merely dream'd
Of these great deeds—thou hast achieved them all.
—Come to thyself, Johanna! Look around—
Thy splendid armour feel, of burnish'd gold!

[JOHANNA *lays her hand upon her breast, recollects herself, and shrinks back.*

BERT. . Out of my hand thou didst receive this helm.

MARIE. No wonder thou shouldst think it all a dream;
For nothing in a dream could come to pass
More wonderful than what thou hast achieved.

JOHANNA (*quickly*).
Come, let us fly! I will return with you
Back to our village, to our father's bosom.

LOUIS. Oh come! Return with us!

JOHANNA. The people here

Exalt me far above what I deserve!
You have beheld me weak and like a child;
You love me, but you do not worship me!"

MARG. Thou wilt abandon this magnificence!

JOHAN. I will throw off the hated ornaments,
Which were a barrier 'twixt my heart and yours
And I will be a shepherdess again,
And, like a humble maiden, I will serve you,
And will with bitter penitence atone
That I above you vainly raised myself!

[*Trumpets sound*

## SCENE X.

*The* KING *comes forth from the Church. He is in the coronation robes.* AGNES SOREL, ARCHBISHOP, BURGUNDY, DUNOIS LA HIRE, DU CHATEL, KNIGHTS, COURTIERS, *and* PEOPLE. *Many voices shout repeatedly, while the* KING *advances.*

Long live the King! Long live King Charles the Seventh!

[*The trumpets sound. Upon a signal from the* KING, *the* HERALDS *with their staves command silence.*

KING Thanks, my good people! Thank you for your love!
The crown, which God hath placed upon our brow,
Hath with our valiant swords been hardly won:
With noble blood 'tis wetted; but henceforth
The peaceful olive branch shall round it twine.
Let those who fought for us receive our thanks;
Our pardon, those who join'd the hostile ranks,
For God hath shown us mercy in our need,
And our first royal word shall now be—Mercy!

PEOPLE. Long live the King! Long live King Charles the good!

KING. From God alone, the highest potentate,
The monarchs of the French receive the crown;
But visibly from his almighty hand
Have we received it. [*Turning to the* MAID
Here stands the holy delegate of Heaven,
Who hath restored to you your rightful King,
And rent the yoke of foreign tyranny!
Her name shall equal that of holy Denis,
The guardian and protector of this realm;
And to her fame an altar shall be rear'd!

PEOPLE. Hail to the Maiden, the deliverer! [*Trumpets*
KING (*to* JOHANNA).
If thou art born of woman, like ourselves,
Name aught that can augment thy happiness.
But if thy Fatherland is there above,
If in this virgin form thou dost conceal
The radiant glory of a heavenly nature,
From our deluded sense remove the veil,
And let us see thee in thy form of light,
As thou art seen in Heaven, that in the dust
We may bow down before thee.
[*A general silence; every eye is fixed upon the* MAIDEN.
JOHANNA (*with a sudden cry*). . . God! my father!

## SCENE X.

THIBAUT *comes forth from the crowd and stands opposite to her*
*Many voices exclaim,*

Her father!
THIBAUT. Yes, her miserable father,
Who did beget her, and whom God impels
Now to accuse his daughter.
BURGUNDY. Ha! What 's this?
DUCHAT. Now will the fearful truth appear!
THIBAUT (*to the* KING). Thou think'st
That thou art rescued through the power of God?
Deluded prince! Deluded multitude!
Ye have been rescued through the arts of Hell.
[*All step back with horror.*
DUNOIS. Is this man mad?
THIBAUT. Not I, but thou art mad,
And this wise bishop, and these noble lords,
Who think that through a weak and sinful maid
The God of Heaven would reveal himself.
Come, let us see, if to her father's face
She will maintain the specious, juggling arts,
Wherewith she hath deluded King and people.

Now, in the name of the blest Trinity,
Belong'st thou to the pure and holy ones?
[*A general silence; all eyes are fixed upon her she remains motionless.*

SOREL God! she is dumb!

THIBAUT Before that awful name,
Which even in the depths of Hell is fear'd,
She must be silent!—She a holy one,
By God commission'd?—On a cursed spot
It was conceived,—beneath the Druid tree
Where evil spirits have from olden time
Their sabbath held.—There her immortal soul
She barter'd with the enemy of man
For transient worldly glory. Let her bare
Her arm, and ye will see impress'd thereon,
The fatal marks of Hell!

BURGUNDY. Most horrible!
Yet we must needs believe a father's words,
Who 'gainst his daughter gives his evidence!

DUNOIS. No, no! the madman cannot be believed,
Who in his child brings shame upon himself!

SOREL (*to* JOHANNA).
O, Maiden, speak! this fatal silence break!
We firmly trust thee! we believe in thee!
One syllable from thee, one single word,
Shall be sufficient—speak! annihilate
This horrid accusation!—But declare
Thine innocence, and we will all believe thee.
[JOHANNA *remains motionless;* AGNES *steps back with horror.*

HIRE. She's frighten'd. Horror and astonishment
Impede her utterance.—Before a charge
So horrible e'en innocence must tremble.
[*He approaches her.*
Collect thyself, Johanna! innocence
Hath a triumphant look, whose lightning flash
Strikes slander to the earth! In noble wrath
Arise! look up, and punish this base doubt,
An insult to thy holy innocence.
[JOHANNA *remains motionless;* LA HIRE *steps back; the excitement increases.*

DUNOIS. Why do the people fear—the princes tremble?
I'll stake my honour on her innocence!
Here on the ground I throw my knightly gage—
Who now will venture to maintain her guilt?
[*A loud clap of thunder; all are horror-struck*
THIB Answer, by Him whose thunders roll above!
Give me the lie. Proclaim thine innocence;
Say that the enemy hath not thy heart!
[*Another clap of thunder, louder than the first, the people fly on all sides.*
BURG. God guard and save us! What appalling signs!
DUCHATEL (*to the* KING).
Come, come, my King! forsake this fearful place!
ARCHBISHOP (*to* JOHANNA).
I ask thee in God's name. Art thou thus silent
From consciousness of innocence or guilt?
If in thy favour the dread thunder speaks,
Touch with thy hand this cross and give a sign!
[JOHANNA *remains motionless. More violent peals of thunder. The* KING, AGNES SOREL, *the* ARCHBISHOP, BURGUNDY, LA HIRE, DUCHATEL, *retire.*

## SCENE XII.

DUNOIS, JOHANNA.

DUNOIS. Thou art my wife—I have believed in thee
From the first glance, and I am still unchanged.
In thee I have more faith than in these signs,
Than in the thunder's voice, which speaks above
In noble anger thou art silent thus;
Envelop'd in thy holy innocence,
Thou scornest to refute so base a charge.
—Still scorn it, maiden, but confide in me;
I never doubted of thine innocence.
Speak not one word—only extend thy hand,
In pledge and token, that thou wilt confide
In my protection and thine own good cause.
[*He extends his hand to her; she turns from him with a convulsive motion; he remains transfixed with horror.*

### Scene XIII.

Johanna, Duchatel, Dunois, *afterwards* Raimond.

Duchatel (*returning*).

Johanna d'Arc! uninjured from the town
The King permits you to depart. The gates
Stand open to you. Fear no injury,—
You are protected by the royal word.
Come follow me, Dunois!—You cannot here
Longer abide with honour.—What an issue!

[*He retires.* Dunois *recovers from his stupor, casts one look upon* Johanna, *and retires. She remains standing for a moment quite alone. At length* Raimond *appears; he regards her for a time with silent sorrow, and then approaching takes her hand.*

Raim. Embrace this opportunity. The streets
Are empty now.—Your hand! I will conduct you.

[*On perceiving him, she gives the first sign of consciousness. She gazes on him fixedly, and looks up to Heaven; then taking his hand, she retires.*

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## ACT V

*A wild wood: charcoal-burners' huts in the distance. It is quite dark; violent thunder and lightning; firing heard at intervals.*

### Scene I.

Charcoal-Burner *and his* Wife.

Ch B. This is a fearful storm, the heavens seem
As they would vent themselves in streams of fire;
So thick the darkness which usurps the day,
That one might see the stars. The angry winds
Bluster and howl like spirits loosed from Hell.
The firm earth trembles, and the aged elms,
Groaning, bow down their venerable tops.
Yet this terrific tumult, o'er our heads,
Which teacheth gentleness to savage beasts,

So that they seek the shelter of their caves,
Appeaseth not the bloody strife of men—
Amidst the raging of the wind and storm,
At intervals is heard the cannon's roar;
So near the hostile armaments approach,
The wood alone doth part them; any hour
May see them mingle in the shock of battle.

WIFE. May God protect us then!—Our enemies,
Not long ago, were vanquish'd and dispersed.
How comes it, that they trouble us again?

CH. B. Because they now no longer fear the King.
Since that the Maid turned out to be a witch
At Rheims, the devil aideth us no longer,
And things have gone against us.

WIFE Who comes here?

## SCENE II.

RAIMOND *and* JOHANNA *enter.*

RAIM. See! here are cottages; in them at least
We may find shelter from the raging storm.
You are not able longer to endure it.
Three days already you have wander'd on,
Shunning the eye of man—wild herbs and roots
Your only nourishment. Come enter in.
These are kind-hearted cottagers.

[*The storm subsides; the air grows bright and clear.*

CHARCOAL-BURNER. You seem
To need refreshment and repose—you're welcome
To what our humble roof can offer you!

WIFE. What has a tender maid to do with arms?
Yet truly! these are rude and troublous times,
When even women don the coat of mail!
The Queen herself, proud Isabel, 'tis said,
Appears in armour in the hostile camp;
And a young maid, a shepherd's lowly daughter,
Has led the armies of our lord the King.

CH. B. What sayest thou? Enter the hut, and bring
A goblet of refreshment for the damsel.

[*She enters the hut*

RAIMOND (*to* JOHANNA).
All men, you see, are not so cruel; here
E'en in the wilderness are gentle hearts.
Cheer up! the pelting storm hath spent its rage,
And, beaming peacefully, the sun declines.
CH. B. I fancy, as you travel thus in arms,
You seek the army of the King.—Take heed!
Not far remote the English are encamp'd,
Their troops are roaming idly through the wood
RAIM. Alas for us! how then can we escape?
CH. B. Stay here till from the town my boy returns,
He shall conduct you safe by secret paths.
You need not fear—we know each hidden way.
RAIMOND (*to* JOHANNA).
Put off your helmet and your coat-of-mail,
They will not now protect you, but betray.
[JOHANNA *shakes her head*
CH. B. The maid seems very sad—hush! who comes here?

SCENE III.

CHARCOAL-BURNER'S WIFE *comes out of the hut with a bowl.*
A BOY.

WIFE. It is our boy, whom we expected back.
[*To* JOHANNA
Drink, noble maiden! may God bless it to you!
CHACOAL BURNER (*to his son*).
Art come, Anet? What news?
[*The boy looks at* JOHANNA, *who is just raising the bowl to her lips; he recognises her, steps forward and snatches it from her.*
BOY. O mother! mother!
Whom do you entertain? This is the witch
Of Orleans!
CHARCOAL-BURNER (*and his* WIFE).
God be gracious to our souls!
[*They cross themselves and fly*

SCENE IV.

RAIMOND, JOHANNA.

JOHANNA (*calmly and gently*).
Thou seest, I am follow'd by the curse,

And all fly from me. Do thou leave me too;
Seek safety for thyself.

RAIMOND. I leave thee! now!
Alas who then would bear thee company?

JOHAN. I am not unaccompanied. Thou hast
Heard the loud thunder rolling o'er my head
My destiny conducts me. Do not fear;
Without my seeking I shall reach the goal.

RAIM. . And whither wouldst thou go? Here stand our foes,
Who have against thee bloody vengeance sworn—
There stand our people, who have banish'd thee—

JOHAN. Nought will befall me but what Heaven ordains.

RAIM. . Who will provide thee food? and who protect thee
From savage beasts, and still more savage men?
Who cherish thee in sickness and in grief?

JOHAN. I know all roots and healing herbs; my sheep
Taught me to know the poisonous from the wholesome
I understand the movements of the stars,
And the clouds' flight; I also hear the sound
Of hidden springs. Man hath not many wants,
And nature richly ministers to life.

RAIMOND (*seizing her hand*).
Wilt thou not look within? Oh wilt thou not
Repent thy sin, be reconciled to God,
And to the bosom of the Church return?

JOHAN. Thou hold'st me guilty of this heavy sin?

RAIM. . Needs must I—thou didst silently confess—

JOHAN. Thou, who hast followed me in misery,
The only being who continued true,
Who clave to me when all the world forsook,
Thou also hold'st me for a reprobate,
Who hath renounced her God—

[RAIMOND *is silent.*
Oh this is hard!

RAIMOND (*in astonishment*).
And thou wert really then no sorceress?

JOHAN. A sorceress!

RAIMOND. And all these miracles
Thou hast accomplish'd through the power of God
And of his holy saints?

JOHANNA Through whom besides?

RAIM. . And thou wert silent to that fearful charge?
Thou speakest now, and yet before the King,
When words would have avail'd thee, thou wert dumb!
JOHAN. I silently submitted to the doom
Which God, my lord and master, o'er me hung
RAIM. . Thou couldst not to thy father aught reply?
JOHAN. Coming from him, methought it came from God;
And fatherly the chastisement will prove.
RAIM. . The heavens themselves bore witness to thy guilt!
JOHAN. The heavens spoke, and therefore I was silent.
RAIM. Thou with one word couldst clear thyself, and hast
In this unhappy error left the world?
JOHAN. . It was no error—'twas the will of Heaven.
RAIM. . Thou innocently sufferedst this shame,
And no complaint proceeded from thy lips!
—I am amazed at thee, I stand o'erwhelm'd.
My heart is troubled in its inmost depths
Most gladly I receive the word as truth,
For to believe thy guilt was hard indeed.
But could I ever dream a human heart
Would meet in silence such a fearful doom!
JOHAN. Should I deserve to be Heaven's messenger,
Unless the Master's will I blindly honour'd?
And I am not so wretched as thou thinkest.
I feel privation—this in humble life
Is no misfortune; I'm a fugitive,—
But in the waste I learn'd to know myself.
When honour's dazzling radiance round me shone,
There was a painful struggle in my breast;
I was most wretched, when to all I seem'd
Most worthy to be envied.—Now my mind
Is heal'd once more, and this fierce storm in nature
Which threaten'd your destruction, was my friend;
It purified alike the world and me!
I feel an inward peace—and, come what may,
Of no more weakness am I conscious now!
RAIM. Oh let us hasten! come, let us proclaim
Thine innocence aloud to all the world!
JOHAN. He who sent this delusion will dispel it!
The fruit of fate falls only when 'tis ripe!
A day is coming that will clear my name.
When those who now condemn and banish me,

Will see their error and will weep my doom.
RAIM. And shall I wait in silence, until chance—
JOHANNA (*gently taking his hand*).
Thy sense is shrouded by an earthly veil,
And dwelleth only on external things.
Mine eye hath gazed on the invisible!
—Without permission from our God no hair
Falls from the head of man.—Seest thou the sun
Declining in the west? So certainly
As morn returneth in her radiant light,
Infallibly the day of truth shall come!

SCENE V

QUEEN ISABEL, *with soldiers, appears in the background*

ISABEL (*behind the scene*).
This is the way toward the English camp!
RAIM. Alas! the foe!
[*The soldiers advance, and perceiving* JOHANNA *fall back in terror.*
ISABEL. What now obstructs the march?
SOLD. May God protect us!
ISABEL. Do ye see a spirit?
How! Are ye soldiers? Ye are cowards all!
[*She presses forward, but starts back on beholding the* MAIDEN.
What do I see!
[*She collects herself quickly and approaches her*
Submit thyself! Thou art
My prisoner!
JOHANNA. I am
[RAIMOND *flies in despair*
ISABEL (*to the soldiers*). Lay her in chains!
[*The soldiers timidly approach the* MAIDEN; *she extends her arms and is chained.*
Is this the mighty, the terrific one,
Who chased your warriors like a flock of lambs,
Who, powerless now, cannot protect herself?
Doth she work miracles with credulous fools,
And lose her influence when she meets a man?
[*To the* MAIDEN.
Why didst thou leave the army? Where 's Dunois,
Thy knight and thy protector

JOHANNA I am banished.

[ISABEL, *stepping back astonished.*

ISABEL. What say'st thou? Thou art banished? By the Dauphin?

JOHAN. Inquire no further! I am in thy power,
Decide my fate.

ISABEL Banish'd, because thou hast
Snatched him from ruin, placed upon his brow
The crown at Rheims, and made him king of France?
Banish'd! Therein I recognise my son!
—Conduct her to the camp, and let the host
Behold the phantom before whom they trembled!
She a magician? Her sole magic lies
In your delusion and your cowardice!
She is a fool who sacrificed herself
To save her king, and reapeth for her pains
A king's reward.—Bear her to Lionel.—
The fortune of the French I send him bound;
I'll follow her anon.

JOHANNA. To Lionel?
Slay me at once, ere send me unto him.

ISABEL (*to the soldiers*).
Obey your orders, soldiers! Bear her hence! [*Exit*

## SCENE VI.

JOHANNA, SOLDIERS.

JOHANNA (*to the soldiers*).
Ye English, suffer not that I escape
Alive out of your hands! Revenge yourselves!
Unsheath your weapons, plunge them in my heart,
And drag me lifeless to your general's feet!
Remember, it was I, who slew your heroes,
Who never showed compassion, who poured forth
Torrents of English blood, who, from your sons,
Snatched the sweet pleasure of returning home!
Take now a bloody vengeance! Murder me!
I now am in your power; I may perchance
Not always be so weak.

CONDUCTOR OF THE SOLDIERS. Obey the Queen!

JOHAN. Must I be yet more wretched than I was!
Unpitying Virgin! Heavy is thy hand!
Hast thou completely thrust me from thy favour?
No God appears, no angel shows himself;

Closed are Heaven's portals, miracles have ceased.
[*She follows the* SOLDIERS

## SCENE VII.

*The French Camp.*

DUNOIS, *between the* ARCHBISHOP *and* DUCHATEL

ARCH. Conquer your sullen indignation, Prince!
Return with us! Come back unto your King!
In this emergency abandon not
The general cause, when we are sorely pressed,
And stand in need of your heroic arm.

DUNOIS. Why are ye sorely pressed? Why doth the foe
Again exalt himself? all was achieved;—
France was triumphant—war was at an end;—
The saviour you have banished; you henceforth
May save yourselves; I'll not again behold
The camp wherein the Maid abideth not.

DUCHAT. Think better of it, Prince! Dismiss us not
With such an answer!

DUNOIS. Silence, Duchatel!
You 're hateful to me; I'll hear nought from you;
You were the first who doubted of her truth.

ARCH. Who had not wavered on that fatal day,
And been bewildered, when so many signs
Bore evidence against her! We were stunned,
Our hearts were crushed beneath the sudden blow.
—Who in that hour of dread could weigh the proofs?
Our calmer judgment now returns to us,
We see the Maid, as when she walked with us,
Nor have we any fault to charge her with.
We are perplexed;—we fear that we have done
A grievous wrong.—The King is penitent,
The Duke remorseful, comfortless La Hire,
And every heart doth shroud itself in woe.

DUNOIS. She a deluder? If celestial truth
Would clothe herself in a corporeal form,
She needs must choose the features of the Maiden.
If purity of heart, faith, innocence,
Dwell anywhere on earth, upon her lips
And in her eyes' clear depths they find their home!

ARCH. May the Almighty, through a miracle,
Shed light upon this awful mystery,

Which baffles human insight.—Howsoe'er
This sad perplexity may be resolved,
One of two grievous sins we have committed!
Either in fight we have availed ourselves
Of hellish arms, or banished hence a saint!
And both call down upon this wretched land
The vengeance and the punishment of Heaven!

## SCENE VIII.

*The same, a* NOBLEMAN, *afterwards* RAIMOND

NOBLE. A shepherd youth inquires after your Highness,
He urgently entreats an interview,
He says, he cometh from the Maiden—

DUNOIS. Haste!
Conduct him hither! He doth come from her!
[*The* NOBLEMAN *opens the door to* RAIMOND. DUNOIS *hastens to meet him.*
Where is she? Where 's the Maid?

RAIMOND. Hail! noble Prince!
And blessed am I that I find with you
This holy man, the shield of the oppressed,
The father of the poor and destitute!

DUNOIS. Where is the Maiden?

ARCH. Speak, my son, inform us!

RAIM. She is not, sir, a wicked sorceress!
To God and all his saints I make appeal.
An error blinds the people. You've cast forth
God's messenger, you've banished innocence!

DUNOIS. Where is she?

RAIMOND. I accompanied her flight
Towards the wood of Ardennes; there she hath
Revealed to me her spirit's inmost depths
In torture I'll expire, and will resign
My hopes of everlasting happiness,
If she's not guiltless, sir, of every sin!

DUNOIS. The sun in Heaven is not more pure than she!
Where is she? Speak!

RAIMOND. If God hath turned your hearts,
Oh hasten, I entreat you—rescue her—
She is a prisoner in the English camp

DUNOIS. A prisoner say you?

ARCHBISHOP. Poor unfortunate!
RAIM. There in the forest as we sought for shelter,
We were encounter'd by Queen Isabel,
Who seized and sent her to the English host.
O from a cruel death deliver her
Who hath full many a time deliver'd you!
DUNOIS. Sound an alarm! to arms! up! beat the drums.
Forth to the field! Let France appear in arms!
The crown and the palladium are at stake!
Our honour is in pledge! risk blood and life!
She must be rescued ere the day is done!
[Exit

*A watch tower—an opening above*

SCENE IX.

JOHANNA *and* LIONEL

FASTOLFE (*entering hastily*).
The people can no longer be restrain d
With fury they demand the Maiden's death.
In vain your opposition. Let her die,
And throw her head down from the battlements!
Her blood alone will satisfy the host.
ISABEL (*coming in*).
With ladders they begin to scale the walls.
Appease the angry people! Will you wait
Till in blind fury they o'erthrow the tower,
And we beneath its ruins are destroy'd?
Protect her here you cannot.—Give her up!
LIONEL Let them storm on! In fury let them rage!
Firm is this castle, and beneath its ruins
I will be buried ere I yield to them.
—Johanna, answer me! only be mine,
And I will shield thee 'gainst a world in arms.
ISABEL. Are you a man?
LIONEL. Thy friends have cast thee off
To thy ungrateful country thou dost owe
Duty and faith no longer. The false cowards
Who sought thy hand, forsake thee in thy need
They for thy honour venture not the fight,
But I, against my people and 'gainst thine,
Will be thy champion.—Once thou didst confess

My life was dear to thee: in combat then
I stood before thee as thine enemy,—
Thou hast not now a single friend but me!

JOHAN. Thou art my people's enemy and mine.
Between us there can be no fellowship.
Thee I can never love, but if thy heart
Cherish affection for me, let it bring
A blessing on my people.—Lead thy troops
Far from the borders of my Fatherland;
Give up the keys of all the captured towns,
Restore the booty, set the captives free,
Send hostages the compact to confirm,
And peace I offer thee in my King's name.

ISABEL. Wilt thou, a captive, dictate laws to us?

JOHAN It must be done; 'tis useless to delay.
Never, oh never, will this land endure
The English yoke; sooner will France become
A mighty sepulchre for England's hosts.
Fallen in battle are your bravest chiefs.
Think how you may achieve a safe retreat;
Your fame is forfeited, your power is lost.

ISABEL. Can you endure her raving insolence?

## SCENE X.

A CAPTAIN *enters hastily.*

CAPT. Haste, general! Prepare the host for battle!
The French with flying banners come this way,
Their shining weapons glitter in the vale.

JOHANNA (*with enthusiasm*).
My people come this way! Proud England, now,
Forth in the field! now boldly must you fight!

FASTOL. Deluded woman, moderate your joy!
You will not see the issue of this day.

JOHAN. My friends will win the fight and I shall die!
The gallant heroes need my arm no more.

LIONEL. These dastard enemies I scorn! They have
In twenty battles fled before our arms,
Ere this heroic Maiden fought for them!
All the whole nation I despise, save one,
And this one they have banish'd.—Come, Fastolfe,
We soon will give them such another day

As that of Poictiers, and of Agincourt.
Do you remain within the fortress, Queen,
And guard the Maiden till the fight is o'er.
I leave for your protection fifty knights.

FASTOL. How! general, shall we march against the foe
And leave this raging fury in our rear?

JOHAN What! can a fetter'd woman frighten thee?

LIONEL. Promise, Johanna, not to free thyself!

JOHAN. To free myself is now my only wish.

ISABEL. Bind her with triple chains! I pledge my life
That she shall not escape.

[*She is bound with heavy chains*

LIONEL (*to* JOHANNA). Thou will'st it so!
Thou dost compel us! still it rests with thee!
Renounce the French,—the English banner bear,
And thou art free, and these rude savage men
Who now desire thy blood shall do thy will!

FASTOLFE (*urgently*).
Away, away, my general!

JOHANNA. Spare thy words!
The French are drawing near.—Defend thyself!

[*Trumpets sound*, LIONEL *hastens forth*

FASTOL. You know your duty, Queen! if Fate declares
Against us, should you see our people fly—

ISABEL (*showing a dagger*).
Fear not! She shall not live to see our fall.

FASTOLFE (*to* JOHANNA).
Thou knowest what awaits thee, now implore
A blessing on the weapons of thy people! [*Exit*

## SCENE XI.

ISABEL, JOHANNA, SOLDIERS.

JOHAN. Ay! that I will! no power can hinder me.
Hark to that sound, the war march of my people!
How its triumphant notes inspire my heart!
Ruin to England! victory to France!
Up, valiant countrymen! The Maid is near:
She cannot, as of yore, before you bear
Her banner—she is bound with heavy chains,
But freely from her prison soars her soul,
Upon the pinions of your battle song.

ISABEL. (*to a* SOLDIER).
Ascend the watch-tower which commands the field,
And thence report the progress of the fight.
[SOLDIER *ascends*
JOHAN Courage, my people! 'Tis the final struggle—
Another victory, and the foe lies low!
ISABEL. What see'st thou?
SOLDIER. They 're already in close fight.
A furious warrior, on a Barbary steed,
In tiger's skin, leads forward the gens d'armes
JOHAN. That 's Count Dunois! on, gallant warrior!
Conquest goes with thee.
SOLDIER. The Burgundian duke
Attacks the bridge
ISABEL. Would that ten hostile spears
Might his perfidious heart transfix, the traitor!
SOLD. . Lord Fastolfe gallantly opposes him.
Now they dismount—they combat man to man,
Our people and the troops of Burgundy.
ISABEL. Behold'st thou not the Dauphin? See'st thou not
The royal banner wave?
SOLDIER. A cloud of dust
Shrouds every thing. I can distinguish nought
JOHAN. Had he my eyes, or stood I there aloft,
The smallest speck would not elude my gaze!
The wild fowl I can number on the wing,
And mark the falcon in his towering flight.
SOLD. . There is a fearful tumult near the trench;
The chiefs, it seems, the nobles, combat there.
ISABEL. Still doth our banner wave?
SOLDIER. It proudly floats.
JOHAN. Could I look through the loopholes of the wall,
I with my glance the battle would control!
SOLD. Alas! What do I see! Our general 's
Surrounded by the foe!
ISABEL. (*points the dagger at* JOHANNA). Die, wretch!
SOLDIER (*quickly*). He 's free!
The gallant Fastolfe in the rear attacks
The enemy—he breaks their serried ranks.
ISABEL (*withdrawing the dagger*).
There spoke thy angel!

SOLDIER. Victory! They fly!
ISABEL. Who fly?
SOLDIER. The French and the Burgundians fly;
The field is cover'd o'er with fugitives.
JOHAN. My God! Thou wilt not thus abandon me!
SOLD. . Yonder they lead a sorely wounded knight;
The people rush to aid him—he 's a prince.
ISABEL. One of our country, or a son of France?
SOLD. They loose his helmet—it is Count Dunois
JOHANNA (*seizes her fetters with convulsive violence*).
And I am nothing but a fetter'd woman!
SOLD. . Look yonder! Who the azure mantle wears,
Border'd with gold?
JOHANNA. That is my Lord, the King.
SOLD His horse is restive, plunges, rears, and falls—
He struggles hard to extricate himself—
[JOHANNA *accompanies these words with passionate movements.*
Our troops are pressing on in full career,
They near him, reach him—they surround him now
JOHAN. Oh, have the heavens above no angels more!
ISABEL (*laughing scornfully*).
Now is the time, Deliverer—now deliver!
JOHANNA (*throws herself upon her knees, and prays with passionate violence*).
Hear me, O God, in my extremity!
In fervent supplication up to Thee,
Up to thy heaven above, I send my soul.
The fragile texture of a spider's web,
As a ship's cable, thou canst render strong;
Easy it is to thine omnipotence
To change these fetters into spiders' webs—
Command it, and these massy chains shall fall,
And these thick walls be rent. Thou, Lord, of old
Didst strengthen Samson, when, enchain'd and blind,
He bore the bitter scorn of his proud foes.
Trusting in thee, he seized with mighty power
The pillars of his prison, bow'd himself,
And overthrew the structure.
SOLDIER. Triumph!
ISABEL. How?

SOLD. . The King is ta'en!

JOHANNA (*springing up*). Then God be gracious to me!

[*She seizes her chains violently with both hands, and breaks them asunder. At the same moment rushing upon the nearest soldier, she seizes his sword and hurries out. All gaze after her, transfixed with astonishment.*

## SCENE XII.

*The same, without* JOHANNA.

ISABEL (*after a long pause*).

How was it? Did I dream? Where is she gone?
How did she break these ponderous iron chains?
A world could not have made me credit it,
If I had not beheld it with these eyes.

SOLDIER (*from the tower*).

How? Hath she wings? Hath the wind borne her down?

ISABEL. Is she below?

SOLDIER. She strides amidst the fight:
Her course outspeeds my sight—Now she is here—
Now there—I see her everywhere at once!
—She separates the troops—all yield to her;
The scatter'd French collect—they form anew!
—Alas! what do I see! Our people cast
Their weapons to the ground, our banners sink—

ISABEL What! Will she snatch from us the victory?

SOLD. . She presses forward, right towards the King.
She reaches him—she bears him from the fight—
Lord Fastolfe falls—the general is ta'en!

ISABEL. I 'll hear no more. Come down!

SOLD. . Fly, Queen! you will be taken by surprise.
Arm'd soldiers are advancing tow'rds the tower.

[*He comes down.*

ISABEL (*drawing her sword*).

Then fight, ye cowards

## Scene XIII.

La Hire, *with soldiers. At his entrance the people of the* Queen *lay down their arms.*

La Hire (*approaching her respectfully*).
Queen, submit yourself—
Your knights have yielded—to resist is vain!
—Accept my proffer'd services. Command
Where you would be conducted

Isabel. Every place
The same, where I encounter not the Dauphin.
[*She resigns her sword, and follows him with the soldiers*

*The Scene changes to the battle field*

## Scene XIV.

*Soldiers with flying banners occupy the background. Before them the* King *and the* Duke of Burgundy *appear, bearing* Johanna *in their arms; she is mortally wounded, and apparently lifeless. They advance slowly to the front of the stage.* Agnes Sorel *rushes in.*

Sorel (*throwing herself on the bosom of the* King).
You 're free—you live—I have you back again!

King. Yes, I am free—I am so at this price!
[*Pointing to* Johanna

Sorel. Johanna!—God! she's dying!

Burgundy. She is gone!
An angel passeth hence! See, how she lies,
Easy and tranquil, like a sleeping child!
The peace of Heaven around her features plays.
The breath of life no longer heaves her breast,
But vital warmth still lingers in her hand.

King. She 's gone!—She never will awaken more,
Her eye will gaze no more on earthly things.
She soars on high, a spirit glorified,
She seeth not our grief, our penitence.

Sorel. Her eyes unclose—she lives!

Burgundy (*in astonishment*). Can she return
Back from the grave, triumphant e'en o'er death?
She riseth up! She standeth!

JOHANNA (*standing up, and looking round*). Where am I?
BURG. . With thine own people, Maiden—with thy friends!
KING. . Supported by thy friend, and by thy King.
JOHANNA (*after looking at him fixedly for some time*).
No! I am not a sorceress! Indeed
I am not one.
KING. Thou 'rt holy, as an angel;
A cloud of error dimm'd our mental sight.
JOHANNA (*gazing round her with a joyful smile*).
And am I really, then, among my friends,
And am no more rejected and despised?
They curse me not—kindly they look on me!
—Yes, all around me now seems clear again!
That is my King!—the banners these of France!
My banner I behold not—where is it?
Without my banner I dare not appear;
To me it was confided by my Lord,
And I before his throne must lay it down;
I there may show it, for I bore it truly
KING (*averting his face*).
Give her the banner!
[*It is given to her She stands quite unsupported the banner in her hand. The heaven is illumined by a rosy light.*
JOHAN See you the rainbow yonder in the air?
Its golden portals Heaven doth wide unfold,
Amid the angel choir she radiant stands,
The eternal Son she claspeth to her breast,
Her arms she stretcheth forth to me in love.
How is it with me? Light clouds bear me up—
My ponderous mail becomes a winged robe;
I mount—I fly—back rolls the dwindling earth—
Brief is the sorrow—endless is the joy!
[*Her banner falls, and she sinks lifeless on the ground. All remain for some time in speechless sorrow Upon a signal from the* KING, *all the banners are gently placed over her, so that she is entirely concealed by them.*

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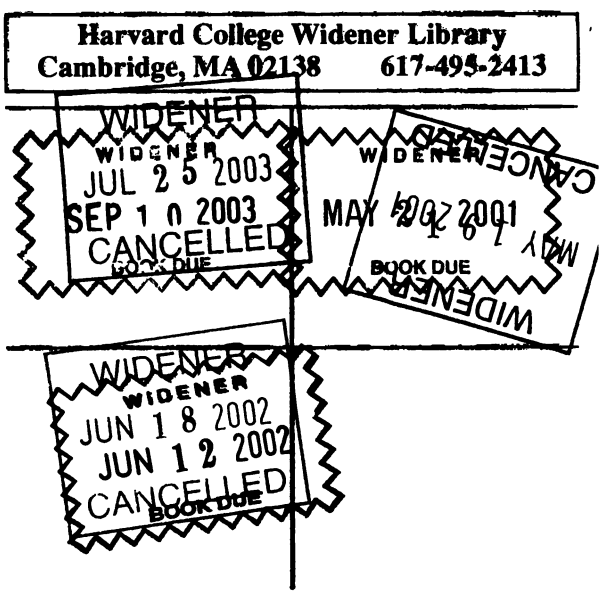


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